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THE BOOK OF JOB

BY

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"For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings"— Job 34: 21.

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THE BOOK OF JOB

INTRODUCTION

FROM its size, and a rapid glance at its contents, we would judge that the book of Job is a very important part of the word of God. Yet how much it is neglected by most; an intimate familiarity even with its contents is the exception rather than the rule.

Unquestionably the treasures of New Testament truth claim our first attention. The life, teachings, sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; the work of the Holy Spirit in establishing the Church on its broad Christian basis; the Epistles, unfolding the wondrous truths of redemption in its individual and corporate aspects—these must have a place in every Christian heart in precedence over all other revelations of truth. But so far from this making us indifferent to the Old Testament, it will beget a hunger which will lead us to search afresh for "things new and old" in its pages. Let us then take up anew the record of God's dealings with His servant in olden times, and find how needed and unchanged are its lessons for the present.

Job is one of the poetical books, called in Scripture "the Psalms." With "the Law and the

Prophets," these form the entire Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24 : 44). This group of poetical books was called by the Jews *Kethubim*, "the writings." In the fourfold division of the Old Testament, with which many are familiar—the Books of the Law, the Prophetic History, the Prophets, and Books of Experience—we find Job belonging to the last group. Arranging these experimental books according to their subjects, we have them as follows :

1. THE PSALMS—the experiences of the godly in Israel, and of Christ, in view of the varied sufferings at the hand of man and of God, with the outlook toward the future kingdom.

2. JOB—the experience of a righteous man in learning deliverance from himself.

3. THE SONG OF SOLOMON—the experiences of the remnant in Israel and of the individual in relation to the love of Christ.

4. ECCLESIASTES—the experiences of a wise man vainly seeking for good in the world.

5. PROVERBS—wisdom for the path, the garnered experience of faith enlightened by revelation.

Naturally, the Psalms are the fullest and most varied of these experimental books, with the special charm of revealing "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." They are dispensational, prophetic, and therefore strongly Jewish, using the term in a good sense. The Song and Proverbs have the national characteristics, in a lesser degree, and Ecclesiastes perhaps least of the four. In Job we pass entirely out of the national atmosphere into what we may call Gentile, or at least

patriarchal, modes of thought and speech. The dispensational features are completely in the background—seen only in the light of other scriptures, and in a secondary way. This leaves us with a book of intense individuality, in which we see a man learning the lesson of his own nothingness, in the fierce fire of deep affliction, by "the messenger of Satan"—through loss, bereavement and disease—fighting single-handed against the crude philosophy and cruel attacks of his friends; above all, with his own proud, unsubdued self-righteousness and unbelief, until "an interpreter" is heard, who leads him to the point where he listens to God and learns the lesson of all the ages, that He alone is God, and therein lies his blessing.

May we turn aside from the mad rush of the present day, causing even God's people to have superficial views and experiences, when restless activity even in service so often hinders meditation and the learning of what self is in the presence of God, and sit down with this suffering man and his friends to learn our lesson too.

Many preliminary questions of interest and importance might claim our attention, but to these we can only give a few words.

First, Is Job a real or a fictitious character? Scripture replies by associating him with Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14 : 14, 20), and James refers to his well-known trials and patience, and to "the end of the Lord" (Jas. 5 : 11) That the book is a magnificent piece of poetry, cast in a strikingly dramatic form, does not in the least imply that it is not absolutely true. Indeed, in God's word poetry

must be truth, and there is nothing grander than the sublime dramas in which the setting is heaven and earth, and the participants are God, the angels, Satan and man. There is no room for fancy here, because the truth is grander than all the imaginations of men.

Next, who is the author of the book? GOD. Some have ascribed it to Moses, or possibly some earlier writer, and undoubtedly the general tone of the book suits the patriarchal age. Moses, who wrote the 90th psalm, certainly had sufficient knowledge and versatility to be the human instrument, and during his stay in the land of Midian may have found this book or gathered its materials. Others have associated the book with the writers of Solomon's time, and it cannot be denied that there is much in its pages that reminds us of Solomon in the Proverbs. In general theme it may be associated with that time when the experiences of God's people were being gathered by inspired men. The knowledge of Jehovah, and of sacrifice, shows that its author must have been in the light of revelation—could not have been a heathen in the ordinary sense of the word. For how feeble for instance are the thoughts of Homer when compared with what we find here. We rest therefore in the all-sufficient fact that it is a most important portion of that Word given by inspiration of God and "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It need hardly be added that inspiration does not give infallibility to the various statements of Job and his friends, but insures the accuracy of the record of those

statements—a vast difference, which annihilation and other systems failing to see, would claim divine sanction for human error.

Geographical and other questions need not detain us long. Uz is believed, by competent authority (the elder Delitzsch), to lie west of Babylon and east of Palestine; perhaps, to the north-east of Idumea. This country, with fertile grazing lands, broken by great stretches of rocks, with the desert near (the land of the inhabitants of Seir when dislodged from their original territory) is the suited home of Job and his friends. These outward details are however of minor importance, given in part of the first verse, where at once we plunge into the narrative which forms the introduction to the book.

The book divides naturally into five parts, of unequal length, which seem to correspond in theme with the numerical significance of their order. The first and last of these divisions are historical, very brief and concise, giving us the introduction and the conclusion; these are written in prose. The main part of the book is poetry of a high order, rising into the sublime, and tender in many of its parts. Three divisions are found here: the controversy of Job and his friends, the testimony of Elihu, and the answer of Jehovah. The five divisions may therefore be given as follows:

I. Chaps. 1, 2. The historical introduction: Job's piety and prosperity; his sufferings at the hand of Satan—in his possessions, his family and his person.

II. Chaps. 3–31. The controversies of Job and

his three friends, exhibiting the futility of human reason in explaining God's ways in affliction, and the deep-rooted self-righteousness of man's heart.

III. Chaps. 32–37. The manifestation of God's character of holiness and of mercy, as exhibited in the testimony of Elihu.

IV. Chaps. 38–42: 6. Jehovah's testimony from creation, testing Job and bringing him into the dust.

V. Chap. 42: 7–17. "The end of the Lord:" the result of the divine ways with Job, restoring him to greater blessing than before.

It need hardly be said that we shall not find the full light of truth as we now enjoy it. The veil hangs before the holiest of God's presence, now revealed in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But there are wondrous glimpses of the glory not yet revealed, and faith in the living God shines brightly at times. With New Testament guidance we find the same principles of light and of love lying beneath the covering. This will come out as we proceed, the Lord graciously enlightening and enabling.

Division I.

The Historical Introduction—Job's piety and prosperity; his sufferings at the hand of Satan, in his possessions, his family, and his person.

In piety as well as in prosperity Job resembles in some measure the patriarch Abraham. His faith, however, was feeble in comparison, and there seems to have been a lack of that personal acquaintance with God which marked "the father of them that believe," who was called "the friend of God." Nor could he compare with Melchizedek, "the priest of the Most High God," to whom Abraham gave tithes, whose personality and nearness to God must not be lost sight of in the brighter light of his typical position.

It is this lack of true acquaintance with God, with the corresponding ignorance of his own heart, which probably made necessary the trials to which Job was subjected.

We come now to the narrative of the first two chapters, which may be divided into three main parts:

1. Chap. 1 : 1–5.—*Job's piety and prosperity.*
2. Chap. 1 : 6–22—*Delivered to Satan.*
3. Chap. 2—*Full trial.*

1.—Job's character is described by four adjectives, which in their order remind us of the significance of numbers, which already seems to mark the structure of the book. He was *perfect*, complete and rounded out in character; humanly speaking, there was nothing uneven or lacking in him. Many

men have excellent traits, but are deficient in other elements which go to make up a complete man. They are, for instance, truthful, but lacking in kindness; amiable, but inclined to be weak. Job was a well-balanced man.

Next, he was *upright*. This describes his relationship to others. Righteousness marked his ways, as he himself knew all too well.

Then, he *feared God;* this is the "beginning of knowledge," and must be taken at its full value. Job was not, as some have thought, an unregenerate man; there was life in his soul. He was a child of God, not a sinner away from Him. Unless this is seen, much of the exercises through which he passed will lose meaning. Lastly, he "*eschewed evil;*" his outward walk corresponded with the state of his heart.

All this was morally excellent; it was not the false pretense of the hypocrite, but the genuine character of one of whom God says, "there is none like him in the earth."

In fitting correspondence with his moral character, and according to Old Testament standards, Job was a man of prosperity, both in his family and his possessions. He had *seven* sons—their number suggesting completeness; and *three* daughters—the manifestation of his character and excellence. These numbers are also seen in his possessions—*seven* thousand sheep and *three* thousand camels; while the *five* hundred yoke of oxen and asses indicate complete ability for all work. Great numbers of servants complete the picture of this noble Emir, "the greatest of all the men of the East."

With abundance of wealth, Job's sons led a life of prosperous ease and enjoyment, sharing their pleasures with their three sisters. Some have thought that this round of festivities was daily, throughout the entire week; but there seems no need to hold it down to such a routine. Nor is it intimated that these festivities were in themselves of a wanton, worldly character, as were his who bade his soul to "eat, drink and be merry." Job only recognized the possibility that they might, as Agur feared for himself, "be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" (Prov. 30: 9.) The word "curse" God, is literally "bless," as also Job was later urged to "bless God and die"—to renounce Him, bidding Him farewell (chap. 2 : 9). In view of the possibility of this, Job offered for each of his sons a burnt-offering.

This sacrifice, while it shows the knowledge of the only way of approach to God—the way of sacrifice, from Abel and Noah onward—indicates that Job lived before the institution of the Levitical ordinances. He offered a *burnt*-offering rather than a sin or trespass-offering.

It is possible that there is a slight token of Job's self-righteousness in his thought that his *sons* might have turned away from God, rather than that he himself had. But this is rather reading a meaning into his action from his subsequent state. It seems only to indicate the solicitude of one who feared God, that his children should not succumb to temptations too common to the life of pleasure. It seems to be mentioned as a proof of the real piety of the man.

2.—*Delivered to Satan* (chap. 1: 6–22)

The scene now changes from earth to heaven, where Jehovah is seen in His majesty, attended by the angelic hosts. "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left" (1 Kings 22: 19).

"No man hath seen God at any time"; and, in the fullest sense, even angels cannot look upon His face who dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). The seraphim veil their faces as they proclaim His thrice holy Name (Isa. 6.).

No creature, be he ever so great, can "know the Almighty to perfection." Yet angels have an access into the presence of God which it would be impossible for man, as at present constituted, to enjoy. Apart from the fact that sin has severed him from God morally, man, as formed of the dust (although endowed with an immortal spirit), is "a little lower than the angels." His natural dwelling-place is the earth, not heaven, and his intercourse with God would naturally be modified and limited by that fact. The heavenly scene before us represents angelic access to God, as contrasted with human approach to Him.

The heavenly beings are called "the sons of God," for He is "the Father of spirits." While this is true of men as well—"for we also are His offspring"—it is because they also have spirits, and so far are like the angels. But in man all is linked with the body, and intercourse is had through that medium. It is only in resurrection that men will

be "equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20: 36).

The expression "sons of God" seems to suggest, not merely a spirit-nature, but moral likeness to God as well. This is further emphasized by the fact that "Satan" is mentioned as in contrast. "Sons of God" shouted for joy when the material universe was founded (Job 38: 7). And when the First-begotten is brought into His own, and reigns over the earth, these "ethereal virtues" will unite with all redeemed creation to give glory "unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (Rev. 5: 13). We know too that infernal beings will also own "that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2: 10, 11). But that is by compulsion; the worship of the "sons of God" is an outflow of their hearts.*

We cannot intrude into things which we have not seen and must not make the attempt, nor seek to have a "religion of angels;" nor would this be the place to gather together the various teachings of Scripture regarding the host of heaven. It must suffice us to note that these beings, as their name both in Hebrew and Greek tells us, are Jehovah's

* It is a mistake to think that the same expression in different parts of Scripture always means the same thing. Mere verbal similarity is not the guide, but the connection and the trend of thought. Thus, the "sons of God" who married "the daughters of men" (Gen. 6: 2) were evidently, as the connection shows, men of the line of Seth who formed mixed marriages with the descendants of Cain. Also, "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26, *R.V.*), so manifestly refers to men that none would dispute it.

messengers. They "excel in strength, and do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Ps. 103: 20). It is their happy privilege to worship and to serve, answering thus in some sense to the priestly worship and Levitical service of God's earthly children. In connection with this worship and service they are seen here gathered, as on some great occasion, before their divine Lord.

In dreadful contrast with these worshiping servants, these "sons of God," we see one utterly unlike them in moral character, though having a spirit-nature like themselves. Indeed he was once morally like them, the very chief of them all (Ezek. 28)—the "covering cherub" that shadowed the throne of Jehovah. But "how hast thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Dazzled with his own glory, wilfully forgetting the creature-place which he must ever keep, he has fallen into pride ("the condemnation of the devil"), by which he became the bitter, eternal enemy of all that is good, and of God Himself.

Revising ordinary views of Satan in the light of this scripture, we find that while morally fallen he still has access into God's presence, can still present himself along with the "sons of God." So far from being shut up in hell, or even confined to earth, we see this shameless apostate taking his place there as though it were still his right. The time is coming, and that ere long, when he shall be cast out of heaven to earth (Rev. 12: 7–12), to tarry there but a short time, and then to be bound a thousand years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20: 1–3); and finally, after leading another brief outbreak of

apostate men, will receive his eternal retribution in the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 10).

How great is the patience of God! He has tolerated Satan's malignity and scheming through all the sad centuries of fallen man's history—permitted him indeed to tempt our first parents in their innocence—and allows him to make his accusations and insinuations that there *is* no good, before His very face. But all is permitted to bring out lessons for eternity. Satan is surely heaping up added wrath for himself, and meanwhile his very malice can but serve God's righteous purposes of blessing, as we shall see in Job's case.

In the dialogue between the Lord and Satan, we have God's challenge and Satan's accusation. The answer to the first question shows where Satan is carrying on his work. Like the restless raven flying over the waste of waters after the flood, he walketh about "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." In heaven he is the accuser; on earth the destroyer; wherever he is, he is ever and only Satan—the enemy of God and of good.

"Hast thou considered my servant Job?" asks Jehovah, adopting for Himself the description of the patriarch already given. God delights in His beloved people, and in their righteous ways. If Satan accuse, He will commend. It is ever thus; judgment is His strange work; He would be occupied with good, and "if there be any virtue and any praise," He thinks upon that.

True to his character, Satan can only accuse. He cannot deny Job's righteousness, but impugns his motives. Having no motive himself but selfish-

ness, he declares that Job is only actuated by that. Why should he not be righteous? Does it not pay? He is prosperous, blessed in every way, and nothing is allowed to come near him for injury. Let God but remove that safeguard, and let Job be deprived of all his wealth, "and he will curse Thee to thy face."

Is this accusation true? Can good exist only with a pleasant environment? Is God afraid to let His children see adversity? Can one who knows and loves God be brought to renounce Him, to "curse Him to His face?" Such questions are involved in Satan's charge. Not only for Job's sake, but the truth's sake, God will not permit this accusation to rest upon Him, nor upon Job. For Satan would ever strike *at God* when outwardly pleading even for righteousness.

Therefore Job is delivered into Satan's hands; all that he has is subject to that enemy's malignity: "Only upon himself put not forth thy hand." Not a hair of the child of God can fall without His permission. Satan is but the unintentional instrument to accomplish God's will; he can do no more than he is allowed to do. How good it is to remember this! If trials come as a host against us, we know that the Almighty is between us and them. They will but work out for us His own purposes of love.

Nor must we forget that not only was God going to vindicate His truth, silence Satan and wicked men, but He knew that His servant Job needed to learn lessons for his own soul. He would put the precious ore into the crucible, for He knew how much

unsuspected evil lay hidden beneath all that outward excellence, mixed even with the inner piety of this good man. He would show that even piety cannot feed upon itself, nor righteousness lean upon its own arm. These are some of the lessons which Job is to learn. May we learn them too!

Before going into the details of Job's trials, it will be well to consider the question of the character and limits of Satan's power. Can he, of his own power, bring down the lightning or raise up a whirlwind? Can he inflict disease, and order events as he may desire?

There are two extremes, from each of which we must guard ourselves. The one would ascribe to Satan powers little, if any, short of divine. It is claimed that as prince of this world, *all* things are in his hand—all the forces of nature as well as the mind and heart of man; in short, that he is the God of providence for this world. The opposite view would ignore his dignity of position, his power as chief of God's creatures, and make him practically inferior to man. We must turn therefore, however briefly, to Scripture, and examine its positive teachings, as well as some passages which need special explanation.

Of his moral power over man there can be no question. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4: 4); "According to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2: 2); "The whole world lieth in the

wicked one" (1 John 5: 19). His power is to blind men to the gospel, and to keep them away from God, in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. The whole world is thus under his blinding, seducing influence. To those who yield themselves wilfully to his sway, he is father: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do . . . He is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8: 44). "He abode not in the truth," and would lead men away from the truth. In the garden of Eden, he seduced the woman into disobedience, in which Adam united and thus brought sin into the world (Rom. 5: 12). "The wages of sin is death," which has passed upon all men—as necessitated by the universality of sin—and thus Satan has the power of death (Heb. 2: 14), not the power of *inflicting* death, but the moral power of sin which brings death, and the judgment which follows.

Sickness is the shadow and precursor of death—"Sick unto death" (Is. 38: 1)—and it is a witness to the solemn truth of man's separation from the Source of life—"alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4: 18). The alienation is moral; the physical death is the governmental infliction. Sickness is thus connected with Satan's power in a moral rather than a physical way.

The subject of demon possession is too large to be entered upon fully. It must suffice to notice the moral effect this possession had. The man in the synagogue at Capernaum had an *unclean* spirit (Mk. 1: 23). Another man had a *dumb* spirit. Frequently the power of these demons was exerted in leading their victims to injure or even to destroy

themselves. The "daughter of Abraham" who had "a spirit of infirmity" (Lk. 13: 11–16) and thus bound by Satan, was undoubtedly more than sick in the ordinary sense. As the power of the enemy made some dumb, it bound her down. It is difficult to define the relation between our own spirit and the body; it must be more so in the case of demon power. But the power seems to be exerted through the mind. This is evident in the case of the demoniac boy (Matt. 17: 15) who was "lunatic and sore vexed" with a demon.

It is striking that Satan was permitted to manifest his power in this special way during our Lord's ministry. It gave Him the opportunity to show to the least believing that He "was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jno. 3: 8).

We come next to those scriptures which connect Satan's activities with natural, physical phenomena. He carried our Lord to the top of the temple, and urged Him to cast Himself down (Matt. 4: 5). He would take possession of the body of Moses (Jude 9). As Elijah called down fire from heaven (2 Ki. 1: 10), we know that the Antichrist will do the same (Rev. 13: 13). An angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (Matt. 28: 2), and another released Peter from prison (Acts 12: 7, etc.). Scripture gives no intimation that Satan has less power than the angels, for he was chief of them all. What then are we to gather from these facts?

The material universe—all things—has been created by the Son of God. "Without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1: 3). Satan has brought nothing into existence; he is but a

creature himself. Similarly all the forces of nature act according to divine laws. "Laws of nature" are but laws of God, the manner in which all things are upheld by the word of His power. He has not relinquished His prerogatives as God of providence any more than His place as Creator. He is sovereign and doeth according to His own will, blessed be His name. He causes His sun to shine and rain to fall; He sends fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness. He holds the winds in His fists, and rides upon the storm. "The sea is His, and He made it;" and the stormy wind, which He commandeth and raiseth up, doth but fulfil His word.

> "He everywhere hath sway,
> And all things serve His might."

God's creatures can use these forces of nature only by His permission. A Christian professor, in performing experiments in natural science before his class, was accustomed to say, "Gentlemen, God is working before your eyes." Man cannot force nature to act contrary to the will of God.

This applies in an especial way to Satan, for he is no longer a servant of God, one of the usual agents of His will, but a rebel. He can do nothing except by divine permission. As prince of this world, he rules in the hearts of men, individually and corporately, but his domain stops there. He is not prince of the earth, the sea, nor air. "Prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2: 2) does not mean lord of the winds, but one whose evil influence pervades the moral world, as the atmosphere envelops

the physical. Where faith realizes the omnipresent supremacy of God over all nature, it can, in its little measure, sleep on the waves amid the tumult of the storm. But only One can say to that storm, "Peace, be still."

Our answer then as to the nature of all miraculous powers of Satan is that they are divine power put forth with divine permission with a divine object, in answer to a Satanic demand for that power. Satan desired to tempt our Lord, and God put all His power at the enemy's disposal to effect his object if possible. The result was the exhibition of the perfections of the sinless Man. The "messenger of Satan" (2 Cor. 12) given to Paul was permitted of God with a purpose of grace, in spite of the malignity of the one who would destroy the usefulness of a servant of the Lord. In regard to every outward form of Satanic activity we can use the words of our Lord, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19: 11). In other words, it was not Satan's lightning, but God's that smote Job's property; God's, not Satan's, whirlwind that destroyed his family. Satan had demanded this—"Put forth Thy hand now, and touch all that he hath" (chap. 1: 11). Job sees only God's hand in his affliction—"The Lord hath taken away" (ver. 21); and God Himself says to Satan, "Thou movedst *Me* against him, to destroy him without cause" (chap. 2: 3).

The bearing of all this upon human sickness and the use of medicines is simple. The connection of sickness with Satan is through sin, and it is a

governmental dealing of God with men calculated to turn them to Him in their need. Medicines are creatures of God, acting according to divinely established laws. To call them works of the devil is the opposite of the truth. Faith therefore can use them, as every other creature of God, with thanksgiving.

We come now to the strokes that fell upon Job.

There were *four* of these, suggesting by their number the *trial* to which the Lord's servant was subjected. The first blow fell upon his oxen and asses, the means of labor which is the chief source of wealth. "Much increase is by the strength of the ox" (Prov. 14: 4); "That our oxen may be strong to labor" (Ps. 144: 14). The Sabeans, a mixed nomadic race of near-by Arabians, swooped suddenly down, slew all the servants except the fugitive who told the tale, and made off with all the spoil. We can see Satan's work in stirring up the cupidity of these people, ever ready to murder and to rob, but the supernatural part was that along with all the rest, it took place at just this time, God permitting it all.

The second stroke follows immediately, falling upon the sheep, the source of his food and clothing, and their attendants. The agency this time was "the fire of God" from heaven. It is not designated as lightning, though some authorities consider it was that, but has been thought to be similar to that which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha. Whatever it was, it was "an act of God," as men say, when destruction comes without human interposition.

We have already intimated, in the earlier discussion, Satan's part in this.

The third stroke falls upon the camels, the animals used for burden-bearing and for travel, the source of commercial wealth. The agents here are the Chaldeans, from the north of the country of Job —apparently a warlike and numerous people at that day, though not yet in their place of later national supremacy. They clear all away, both of camels and servants, as completely as had the Sabeans.

Lastly, the whirlwind falls upon the house where the sons and daughters were feasting, leaving but one servant to tell of the awful calamity.

Thus the blows fall in quick succession without opportunity for partial recovery. They come with terrible suddenness, in the midst of prosperity, happiness and piety. They were incurable, cumulative, stunning. In one brief hour Job is stripped of all. Truly, Satan had done his work thoroughly, under the permission of an all-wise God.

The storm has burst in all its fury; how does the sufferer act beneath it? Not a murmur escapes his lips at the loss of his property; and when the climax is reached, he meets it in the dignity of a man of faith, yet with a tender, broken heart. Rent mantle and shorn head are the marks of a mourner. He acknowledges that nothing was his by right; he had come into the world naked, and would leave it as he came. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6: 7). But he turns from the stroke to the Hand that gave it. He looks past all

second causes, whether human or miraculous, and lays his sorrow at the Lord's feet. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

So Satan has utterly failed thus far. His object had been to drive Job from God; he had only drawn him *to* Him. This proves the reality of Job's faith.

But more, much more, is to follow.

3.—*Full Trial.*

Again Satan presents himself before God as at the first, and again the Lord asks concerning Job, faithful in spite of the afflictions through which he had passed. Unabashed by his failure to move Job, Satan makes fresh demands, coupled with fresh accusations. "Skin for skin"—to save part of his skin man will give up another part; yea, to save his *life* he will surrender everything he has, including his fear of God. Hitherto God had not allowed Job's *body* to be touched; let the hand of God be laid upon that, and how quickly will Job's vaunted piety disappear.

We may be sure that divine *love*, as well as divine wisdom, subjected this afflicted child of God to fresh assaults at the hands of Satan. We see the tenderness in the words, "Save his life." The enemy is to do all, and thus prove the falsity of his own charge. Every prop is to be removed, every earthly joy taken away, and still Job will cleave to the God whom he has trusted, even though dimly. And on the other hand, through the very exercises

through which he must pass, Job will learn the lesson of all lessons, for all eternity, that God is all in all; and as a step to that knowledge, he will see that *he* is nothing.

It is not necessary that we should know the exact nature of the disease which fell upon Job. Some have thought it to be leprosy, the most hopeless, loathsome and deadly of all human affections. Others have named it elephantiasis, a repulsive and fearful disease in which every part of the body is affected. It is accompanied not only by the distortion and swelling of the limbs which give it its name, but by putrid inflammation extending throughout the entire frame. It "begins with the rising of tubercular boils, and at length resembles a cancer spreading itself over the whole body, by which the body is so affected that some of the limbs fall completely away."

Without going into speculation, however, we may recall the solemn warnings of God if His people should depart from Him: "The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed" (Deut. 28: 27, 35). When, in Old Testament times, practically all God's dealings with men were on an earthly plane, it is evident that such an affliction would be regarded as a particular token of His displeasure—at least by those who had not learned the varied uses of adversity in the school of God. We shall find that practically all—Job's friends, and even himself—labored under this misapprehension; and this accounts for the long and painful controversy be-

tween them, in which neither side could reach what God could approve.

And, apart from revelation, how wretched and hopeless was Job's condition! Who that knew him in the days of his prosperity could have recognized him in the abject misery of his present condition, sitting in ashes and scraping himself with a potsherd? The ashes suggest his mourning for his losses, especially his bereavement; the potsherd might well typify his own broken condition, and while he vainly seeks to alleviate the intolerable pain and itching of his "putrefying sores," his self-contemplation is equally powerless to alleviate the sufferings of his soul.

The wife is the first to break down completely. As "the weaker vessel" this is not surprising, for the husband should ever be the leader in faith and love, as in the responsibilities which he cannot transfer to another. But there is something more than the outward collapse of faith; there seems to be a spirit of apostasy which had listened to the lie of Satan. As the woman of old was beguiled by the attractiveness of Satan's snare, so she seems to have fallen before the apparent hopelessness of Job's contending against a "sea of troubles."

The wives of men of faith have not always been on the same plane as their husbands. Sarah counselled Abraham to resort to human expedients to secure the promises. Zipporah evidently stood in the way, for a time, of Moses acting in faithfulness in his family (Exod. 4: 24–26). Michal mocked when David exhibited the joy and liberty which a sense of grace always gives (2 Sam. 6: 16, 20–23). Faith

must necessarily be an individual matter between the soul and God. It cannot be received at second hand. On the other hand, however, God abundantly blesses the family of the man of faith, and often gives him the joy of seeing those dear to him resting also in the unfailing faithfulness of One who invites all to trust in Him.

We will not dogmatize about Job's wife. The root of the matter may have been in her, and she may have been only for a time overwhelmed by her grief. But her words are very evil: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die." It has been thought that her love to Job prompted these words; that she could not endure seeing one so dear to her suffering such torture, and practically counseled suicide. We can leave her case with Him who searcheth the heart, and seek to get the benefit of Job's noble reply: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" She was associating herself with the profane who despise God. She had been quite willing to enjoy good things at the hand of God; now that He sees fit to send trial, shall we refuse to take it as meant for good? It was *God* who was the giver in each case.

Alas, how few of us can bear adversity! "If thou faintest in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." And yet can we, would we, escape suffering in a world like this? In one form or another, at one time or another, it must come.

"Aliens may escape the rod,
Nursed in earthly, vain delight,

But a true-born child of God,
Must not, would not, if he might."

Judging from what follows, we might include the visit of Job's friends in the general assault of Satan. In that way we speak of that assault as threefold: first, circumstantial, in the disasters upon his property and family and himself; second, personal, in the advice of his wife and the arguments of his friends; third, inward, in the doubts of the goodness and justice of God which Job entertained. But strictly speaking, Satan's work ended when he launched his four bolts against Job and then smote him with disease.

These three friends of Job were evidently persons of age, rank, and, indeed piety. For we must distinguish between their erroneous dealings with Job and their personal character. Like him they were on the wrong track—more so than himself, but like him also they were in the end brought into a true realization of God's ways.

They came from districts noted for men of wisdom: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished? (Jer. 49: 7). The "men of the East" were similarly famed. As has just been said, they seem to have been men of personal piety; at least they had a knowledge of the true God and of righteousness. Of the significance of their names we can say little. Eliphaz has been defined as "God is strength," and by others, "God is fine gold.' Both meanings suggest at least the greatness and preeminence of God. His country, Teman, means "the south," the country lying under the sun, open

to the light. But we have learned that while the south country is open to the light, it is apt to be dry and arid, as indeed Arabia was. It needs, as Achsah said, "springs of water." Light without life can never help.

Bildad is said to mean "son of contention," and he certainly answers to his name in these controversies. His place, Shuach, "depression or pit," is also appropriate. Zophar, "a sparrow," from the root verb "to twitter," is the masculine form of Zipporah, Moses' wife, and like her he was an unconscious opponent of God's judgment on the flesh, though he was very zealous in condemning the fancied works of the flesh in Job. His vehement denunciations being utterly out of place, were as harmless as the "twitterings" of the bird for which he was named. His place, Naamah, "pleasantness," is, like the miserable comfort he offered, but a mockery of true happiness. But these meanings are only tentative.

These men have evidently heard in their distant homes of Job's affliction. As true friends they are not unmoved, and make an appointment to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. Certainly their motive was excellent; how they succeeded appears later.

The second scene in this divine drama may be said to open with the arrival of these friends. As they draw near what a sight meets their shocked vision! Can this wretched, loathsome object, covered with putrid sores, sitting in the midst of ashes, be their stately friend, the greatest man of the East? They burst into tears, rend their garments and sit

down with him. Very touching and appropriate this is, and the silence of seven days emphasizes the reality of their sympathy. They wept with him who wept. Unable to help by words, their silence would indicate how deeply moved they were.

Meanwhile the thoughts of all were doubtless busy. After the first shock produced by Job's terrible condition was over, they must necessarily have begun to think—why has this evil come upon him? Long accepted principles would suggest an answer, to which they seem slow to give expression. God punishes the ungodly; the righteous are prosperous; therefore . . . can it be? On his part too Job is meditating. He too had accepted his prosperity as a mark of God's approval. He has been righteous and faithful, and God rewards faithfulness—at least he had thought He did. Can it be that God . . .? But he has not yet allowed these thoughts to find expression; indeed they may not yet have been present. But his sufferings are intense, his burden of grief and pain intolerable. The silent sympathy of his friends does not soften his heart. While he muses the fire burns, and at last the pent-up grief bursts forth in bitter cursings and lamentations.

Division II (Chaps. 3–31).

The controversies of Job and his three friends, exhibiting the futility of human reason in explaining God's ways in affliction, and the deep-rooted self-righteousness of man's heart.

We have in this division the largest and, in many respects, the most complicated part of the book. It has been well named *The Entanglement*, for it is a mass of argument, denunciation, accusation, suspicion, partly correct theories, and withal flashes of faith and hope—all in the language of loftiest poetry, with magnificent luxuriance of Oriental metaphor. To the casual reader there may seem to be no progress, and but little clarity in the controversy. And it must be confessed that God's people at large seem to have gained little from these chapters beyond a few familiar, beautiful and oft-quoted verses.

But can we think that God would have permitted a useless book to be included in that "all scripture," which is profitable? Let us then come with confidence to these controversies and patiently seek their meaning, see if we can trace an individuality in each speaker, and a progress in his declarations; whether we can mark a rise in the faith of Job, so nearly eclipsed, and a preparation for the unfolding of God's ways which follow after.

We add a word here as to the inspiration of the book. There can be no question as to this, for it is referred to both in the Old Testament (Ezek. 14: 14, 20) and in the New (Jas. 5: 11); it is also quoted in the New Testament (1 Cor. 3: 19). But inspira-

tion is often mistaken for revelation, or the infallible statement of divine truth. We have the inspired *record* of what Satan said to Eve, and to our Lord; of the utterances of wicked men, like Pharaoh and Rabshakeh, but no one thinks of these words as being the truth of God. Similarly here we have an inspired record of what Job and his three friends said, but while most of it was true, it was out of place and misapplied. This is all perfectly plain.

The whole Division may be separated into three subdivisions, of unequal length.

SUBDIVISION I.—*Job's opening Lament* (chap. 3).

SUBDIVISION II.—*The controversy with the three friends* (chaps. 4–26).

SUBDIVISION III.—*Job's closing Monologue* (chaps. 27–31).

We need hardly point out the numerical appropriateness of these subdivisions: the first introduces the entire controversy; it is the beginning of all that is said afterwards. The second speaks of antagonism and the vain efforts of man to help, with glimpses of faith between. The third is the full display of Job's heart. Significantly he begins and closes the controversy.

1.—*Job's opening Lament* (chap. 3).

Perhaps that which strikes the reader most forcibly on entering upon this chapter, is the great contrast between it and the preceding one. Can this be the same man who meekly bowed his head to the successive strokes of adversity which fell so suddenly upon him?—who bore the torture of his

dread disease, and listened unmoved to his wife's solicitations to suicide? "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

For seven days he has sat silent with his friends, and when he begins to speak, it is not words of submission or trust that we hear, but curses and imprecations upon the day of his birth, and longing for death! What has made this great change?

It might be thought that it was the long continuance of his sufferings which broke Job down; when first afflicted, he bore up under it, but as weary days and nights followed each other with unvarying wretchedness, he gave way. But this hardly seems consistent with the calm dignity of the man as shown in the first two chapters.

In the light of his subsequent attitude, it seems more likely that Job's thoughts of God had much to do with this change. Previously, he had seen Him as the beneficent Ruler and Disposer of events. But it appears as we go on that Job allowed suspicions of God's justice and goodness to intrude. He felt himself as if in the hands of arbitrary power, suffering for what he had not done. He sees no way of escape, and therefore wishes for death. This seems to account for the great change in his words. It is also in keeping with the answers he gives his friends. As long as his sufferings were outward, or physical, Job was calm; but when doubts of God's goodness were entertained he collapsed. This will appear abundantly as we proceed; it is simply noticed here as suggesting the main theme of the book—the vindication of God, and His ways with men.

On the other hand, we must remember that even when in such anguish of soul as well as of body, Job did not fall as Satan predicted he would. He did not curse God, although sorely perplexed at His treatment. Ever and anon in the midst of greatest anguish, his faith shines forth in prayer or in confidence—illustrating the usually accepted translation of the words, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (chap. 13: 15).

Taking up now the lament, we may divide it into five parts.

First: Job curses the day of his birth (vers. 1–9).
Second: Wishes he had died in infancy (vers. 10–12).
Third: Death described as a rest (vers. 13–19).
Fourth: He longs for death (vers. 20–23).
Fifth: He is oppressed by terror (24–26).

(1) Job curses the day of his birth (vers. 1–9). Of only one man has it ever been said—by our Lord—"It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26: 24). Judas was an apostate, the "son of perdition," into whose heart Satan entered, and who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed Him by a kiss, and then filled with remorse went and hanged himself, and "went to his own place." For a child of God to wish he had never been born indicates a complete, if but temporary, eclipse of faith.

Jeremiah, utterly oppressed by the hardness of the people's heart, and seeing the inevitable ruin into which they were drifting, uses language somewhat similar to Job's (Jer. 20: 14–18). He curses

not only the day of his birth, but the man who brought his father the news instead of slaying the child, and wishes he were overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrha. There is this to be said of Jeremiah's outburst: it was not merely because of his own sufferings as obliged to bring a message which the people refused—and therefore hated the messenger ; but is there not a measure of grief over the people's obduracy and inevitable doom ? Like Moses before and Paul afterwards, he longed supremely for the people's blessing. Failing to see this, he had rather not have been born. We justify none of these expressions in God's beloved servants, but they seem to occupy a higher moral plane than Job does here.

Let us contrast *all* these godly men with the matchless Sufferer. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Ah, He never failed; the intensity of His sufferings but furnished the occasion for the exhibition of His sinless perfection.

In this first part Job curses the day of his birth, wishes that it could be blotted out of the calendar, because it allowed his birth. He desires that that day and night never come into remembrance—so that the very recurrence of the day that was a reminder of his existence might cease. Verse 8 has been translated, "Let those who curse the day curse it, who are skilled in stirring up leviathan," alluding to the heathen myth that a dragon devoured the sun and moon and so prevented the

day. If this is correct, it shows how far Job had drifted in his thoughts, to turn thus to the superstitions of the heathen.

In what contrast to this is the joy of the believer in dwelling upon his spiritual birthday. How Paul loved to look back to the time when the light above the brightness of the sun shone into his darkened heart. "Who before was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious . . . and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus . . . Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1: 13–17). So in the many persecutions and afflictions which befell him for the gospel's sake, we hear not the faintest approach to these lamentations of Job. When he and Silas were beaten, thrust into prison, their feet fast in the stocks, their thoughts were not of cursing the day of their birth, but brought songs in the night.

The contrast shows the difference between Old and New Testament light, but it shows too that even in Old Testament days God's children needed to learn the sweet uses of adversity, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord.

In passing through our book, we must not fail to note the exquisite beauty of expressions, both of Job and of all who speak. For if the Spirit of God has seen fit to inspire a writing, He would have us note its form as well as its contents. Thus we have in ver. 9, in the margin of our version, "Neither let it see the eyelids of the morning," or as the clause has been rendered, "Let it not

refresh itself with the eyelids of the dawn"—poetry indeed of exquisite beauty

2. In the second part of his lament (vers. 10–12) Job declares his wish that he had died as soon as he was born, or had been left without care or food. It is sad indeed when one cannot look back to those early days of helplessness with tender thoughts of the loving care that watched over his unconscious hours. Of all creatures, man is the most helpless and dependent in infancy. It is to "hide pride" from him, and to call forth love in his behalf. To curse his infancy thus was to trample upon what is best in our fallen humanity, and shows a soul far from communion with God. Job had forgotten all the past; the sorrow of the present had eclipsed all else. It is painful to read such words.

3. Death is here described as a rest (vers. 13–19) in which all have an equal share—the old and the young, even the unborn babe; the great and the small alike are at rest: kings whose former palaces have crumbled into ruins, and princes whose vast wealth has all been left, are here at last in profound and equal repose. The wicked cannot trouble them, nor master exact service from his slave; prisoners and their captors find no distinction in the presence of death, that great leveler of mankind. What a picture it is, reminding one of the dread vision of the prophet who sees Pharaoh, king of Egypt, descending into Sheol to share with the great among the nations their common heritage of death—"which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit" (Ezek. 32: 24).

But is this the doctrine, even of the feebler light of the Old Testament, of the future? Ezekiel did but contrast the former greatness of the nations, now brought low; but Job goes further and puts all in an unconscious sleep, "as infants which never saw light." Is there no distinction between the condition of the wicked and of the righteous after death? We cannot here go into the Old Testament doctrine of the future state,* but the walk with God of His servants, their calm outlook into the unknown future, tell us that they in spirit "looked for the city which hath foundations." The constant contrast between the righteous and the wicked, and their moral unlikeness points not uncertainly to most divergent futures: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. 14: 32). In thus blurring the future, Job shows how far his soul had drifted from the truth of God. In plain language he is longing for annihilation, and we know how materialists and believers in conditional immortality have turned to these and similar utterances for support for their unscriptural views.

Let us contrast these utterances of one temporarily forgetful of the great hope planted in the heart of God's children, with the language of faith in the Old and New Testaments. Job's own words are a refutation of his unbelief here: "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (chap. 19: 25). David also said, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17: 15). Our Lord refutes the Sadducees,

* On this subject see, "Immortality in the Old Testament," by C. Crain—same publishers.

with whom Job unconsciously identifies himself, as to the Old Testament teaching regarding the state of the dead: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22: 32). He points out the fearful contrast between the state of the careless rich man and the believing beggar, Lazarus (Lk. 16). And in the full Christian statements of the Epistles, do such words as "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord," or, "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," echo Job's unbelieving laments? We can well understand a need for the chastening hand of God upon him if Job willingly entertains such thoughts as those to which he gives expression here.

4. He longs for death (vers. 20–23). Having pictured death as a state of dreamless sleep, Job gives vent to his longing for this *nirvana*. He asks why one so wretched as he should be debarred from the repose he seeks. He adds to this the first of his charges against God, calling himself "the man whom God hath hedged in." Similar language is used in Jeremiah's Lamentations, "He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light . . . He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out; He hath made my chain heavy" (Lam. 3: 2–7). But he goes on:—"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not . . . It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (vers. 22, 26). We fail to find anything like this in Job's words.

In the New Testament we have still greater triumphs: "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5: 3, 4); "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," etc. (1 Pet. 1: 7).

5. In his concluding words (vers. 24–26) Job turns from his longing after death to the reasons which make him desire it. His anguish takes precedence of his hunger; he could say with the psalmist, "My tears have been my meat," and may we not find in the latter connection some explanation of Job's misery: "While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" (Ps. 42: 3). Job had lost the sense of God's favor; his sighs gush forth like a torrent *because* he fears God has forsaken him. Lacking a conscious sense of filial relationship (as was natural in the former dispensation, although truly born of God), he could not withstand the torturing doubt that God had given him over to hopeless misery. This fear had apparently been lurking in his heart—possibly even in his bright days—and now it has come upon him! In verse 26 he speaks of a fresh avalanche of trouble before real relief from the former anguish had been given: "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet" (from the former attack), "then trouble cometh." Our version seems to refer this to Job's condition of former prosperity: that he was not dwelling in carnal ease, but walking in the fear of God, when trouble came; but while this is in accord with Job's state of soul as it comes out later, it seems

a little too early to find self-vindication on his part. It seems rather to be the expression of grief at the repeated attacks of misery which he is now suffering; as in the psalm quoted, he could say, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

But he does not follow the psalmist and hush his soul into submission: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." Job *will* yet praise Him, but he knows nothing of this as yet. He closes his wail of unrelieved despair, and his friends begin to speak.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*The controversy with the three friends* (chaps. 4–26).

The second of the three subdivisions is, as has been said, the largest and most complicated portion of the division (chaps. 3–31). Preceded by the wail of the suffering patriarch (in chap. 3), it is followed by a monologue in which he maintains (in chaps. 27–31) that for which he had contended throughout—his uprightness—but with his sufferings unrelieved, and the dark enigma of the *reason* for those sufferings unexplained. It cannot therefore be considered as a satisfactory conclusion. Job has met *men*, and vanquished them on their own ground; but he must meet and answer *God*—with what different and blessedly satisfactory results! But this does not belong to our present theme.

In the controversy of the three friends we have a unity of thought, based on a common principle.

That principle is that all suffering is of a *punitive* rather than of an instructive nature; that it is based on God's justice rather than on His love—though these are ever combined in all His ways. Such a principle necessarily fails to distinguish between the sufferings of the righteous and those of the wicked. Carried, as the friends did carry it, to its legitimate conclusion, this principle meant that Job's sufferings were for sin, hitherto undetected, and that his only hope for relief was in a confession of his sin in order to obtain mercy.

Indeed, toward the close of their controversy, the friends apparently lose sight even of mercy for the penitent, and in the desire to vindicate their principle and themselves, dwell upon the awful doom of the wicked at the hand of God in this world, and with only a greater darkness hanging over the future.

On his part, Job evidently has but little advantage over his friends as to the principle upon which they base their addresses. He too sees that punishment is for evil, eventually for actual sin. Indeed, he takes common ground with them and states with fully as much clearness and force the certainty of the doom of the wicked, both now and hereafter. But Job differs from his friends in this: while they steadily tend to a conviction of *his* hypocrisy and sin, Job faces the awful thought of *God's* injustice. He is led to this by the consciousness of personal rectitude, which he cannot relinquish in the darkest hour. *Why* then is he so afflicted? On the other hand, thank God, he has true faith. Even where he cannot understand, he must believe in

God; and this faith remains, with increasing light, through all his sufferings and in spite of all mysteries.

There is a distinct progress in this twofold controversy. The friends, beginning with a measure of courtesy and kindliness, are carried forward into ever-increasing suspicion, harshness and denunciation. Job, on the other hand, though overwhelmed at the first, gradually finds a footing for his faith, and emerges from despair into a measure of hope. He thus answers Satan's accusation, and God is vindicated by the faith of His servant; He can go on then to teach him, painful though it was, the lesson he so deeply needed.

We must add a word as to this principle of the punitive nature of suffering. Nowhere in the Old Testament is it enunciated with greater clearness and force than in this book. Elsewhere there is greater prominence given to faith, and to that upon which faith rests—the mercy and goodness of God—"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." But it still remains that the Old Testament view of God and His people makes possible some of the gloom that rests upon Job. It has been well said that the book of Job could not have been written after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now that the Man of Sorrows has come and suffered as none ever could under the wrath of God for sin; now that God is revealed as Father, and the way into His house of cloudless glory has been opened; a great line of separation has been drawn between suffering for sin and for righteousness, between the wicked and the righteous. The heaviest trials

now are but "light affliction which is but for a moment."

Faith, even where it could not reason, always acted thus; and where it was in full exercise rose superior to all sorrow. Abraham laid his son on the altar without a murmur, and even Jacob was not long overwhelmed by the loss of Joseph. In Job, faith is real, but in the background, while the governmental principle of punishment for sin usurps the first place—until Elihu leads up to the great revelation of Jehovah Himself, in whose holy presence another divine principle shines out—the sinfulness of *nature* even in His own people, and His absolute *goodness* as well as righteousness, which will bring in "the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." We are well-nigh on New Testament ground when we reach this "end of the Lord." But we must return to our immediate theme.

In the controversy, as already stated, there is a distinct progress—in opposite directions—of the friends of Job. The former are getting further from the light; the latter has his face set toward the light. Each of the three friends speaks, Eliphaz and Bildad three times each, and Zophar but twice. To each address Job gives an answer, and, as already said, silences his opposers. The entire controversy may thus be divided naturally into three sections, consisting of the address of the friends and Job's replies to them. Job therefore speaks three times more frequently than each of the friends, and as a rule at greater length.

We may also remark as to the tone of these ad-

dresses and replies. The friends grow more severe; Job, from almost complete absorption in his own sufferings, passes into abuse and satire upon his friends, but eventually emerges from that into a high and dignified discussion of the great principles involved. The friends on the contrary are at their best at the beginning; then become suspicious, and close with positive abuse.

Another fact must be added. There is a certain measure of knowledge of God. Job's friends were not heathen philosophers, but in all likelihood men who feared God, who were His children, though with but little light. The same must be said of Job with greater emphasis.

We are now ready to take up the details of the controversy. It falls as has just been said into three evident portions:

Section 1.—The first addresses of the friends—their doctrine of the punitive nature of suffering; Job's despair (chaps. 4–14).

Section 2.—The second addresses of the friends—suspicions and charges; Job rises from despair to hope (chaps. 15–21).

Section 3.—The third addresses of the friends; Job silences them—but the enigma remains (chaps. 22–26).

The numerical significance—in the two opposite directions—is quite clear. The third is the full manifestation where each stands, as the first shows the beginning, and the second the development.

Section 1.—The first addresses of the friends—their principle of the punitive nature of suffering; Job's despair.

Remembering the fundamental error of the friends, we cannot withhold admiration for the force with which they lay down their principle; nor must we fail to recognize the truth of what they say, even though it is perverted. And the sublime poetry of their utterances has wrung admiration even from unbelievers.

This section falls again into three parts, each marked by the address of one of the friends and Job's reply.

1. Eliphaz — the greatness and justice of God. Job's reply (chaps. 4–7).

2. Bildad—suffering is retribution. Job's reply (chaps. 8–10).

3. Zophar — suffering is for sin. Job's reply (chaps. 11–14).

It will be found that, while all the friends have a common principle from which they reason, they are by no means without individuality. Each one has his personal characteristics and his own method of address.

Eliphaz, perhaps the eldest, is marked by dignity, appeal to God, and a measure of entreaty.

Bildad appeals to reason and lessons of the past.

Zophar, perhaps the youngest, is marked by the sternness and impetuosity of his denunciations of sin, and declaration of the certainty of its judgment. All this will appear as we examine these addresses in detail.

1.—*Eliphaz's address and Job's reply—The greatness and justice of God* (chaps. 4–7).

Eliphaz begins his address, partly and necessarily in reply to the sad complaint of Job, but chiefly to minister as he thinks Job's spiritual condition may need it. The address, in chapters 4 and 5, is one of much dignity, great beauty of expression, and embodies much self-evident truth. It may be divided into seven portions:

(1) Reproach for Job's despair (chap. 4: 1–5).
(2) God's favor to the righteous (vers. 6–11).
(3) Vision of God's greatness and holiness (12–21).
(4) Experience of God's ways (chap. 5: 1–5).
(5) Exhortation to Job to seek God (vers. 6–11).
(6) God's triumph over evil (vers. 12–16).
(7) The uses of affliction (vers. 17–27).

(1) In the opening words of his address, Eliphaz begins the criticism which characterizes the words of the friends throughout. What he says is perfectly true, and Job who had comforted others in times of distress should have borne up under his trials; and yet would we not expect some words of sympathy from a friend—a "brother born for adversity?" Would not grace ever teach us to "weep with those who weep?" The blessed Man of Sorrows did not take sufferers to task in this way, but was moved with compassion, even to tears, at human sorrow. It is this harshness which indicates a wrong principle in Eliphaz, which comes out more clearly as he proceeds. With him sin and suffering are as root and fruit: he knows no classes of suffering, fails to distinguish between the righteous and

the wicked, and therefore eventually is found to be a false accuser of his friend.

(2) He enunciates this principle by appealing to Job's own experience, not as condemning but approving. What had hitherto given him confidence? Was it not his fear, his piety? Who then ever perished, if he were righteous? On the other hand, how often had the wicked been cut off, reaping as they had sowed. No matter how strong and mighty, they are cut off, as fierce lions having their teeth broken out. But while these things are true, generally, Eliphaz has lost all distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and presses Job into a dilemma which he is already beginning to feel—either *he* or *God* is unjust!

(3) Next, in words of great solemnity and of lofty poetic beauty, Eliphaz describes his vision of the greatness and holiness of God. In the silent watches of the night, an apparition had come before him, causing him to tremble with a nameless dread. While not *seeing*, he had *felt* the whisper of "a still small voice," that made his hair stand up.

"Shall mortal man be more just than God?"—or "just before God," in His presence. Compared with His holiness, even the heavenly beings are unclean. The seraphim veil their faces as they proclaim Him. How much less can mortal man, whose mortality is a witness of his sin, vaunt himself. His breath is in his nostrils; like a tale that is told his life is compassed in a day — like the ephemeral moth.

This is all quite true, and in other connections most appropriate; but, as already said, it falls be-

side the mark, for it does not meet Job's need. Truly, in the sight of God, all are as an unclean thing, but will that set aside the fact that there is such a thing as righteousness in the children of God? If *all* are thus unclean in the sight of God, then Eliphaz must take his place beside Job, a thing he is by no means ready to do, and all explanation of suffering fails.

(4) In this portion of his address Eliphaz, as befits a man of age and observation, gives the results of his experience among men. He tells Job it will be in vain to cry for aid to the "saints," the holy ones, his only help is in God, and if he complain against *Him* he will but lay himself open to divine anger. Wicked men have prospered for a little season, only to fall under the curse. There is hardly an allusion as yet to Job's family, and yet verses 4, 5 might be taken as applying to them—children crushed without deliverance, and harvests taken by the hungry robber. He is rather describing the result of his experience and observations, that eventually, even in this life, suffering is the portion of the sinner. It need hardly be said how incomplete and unsatisfactory this is. Even in the Old Testament the "man of the earth" prospers; the wicked spreads himself "like a green bay tree," and even in death has no bands.

Let us suppose that Abraham, Jacob, or David reasoned thus about their sufferings: they were wicked, then, because they suffered! And in the New Testament, how could tribulation which worketh patience be gloried in, or how could "our light affliction which is but for a moment," be said to

work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Truly Eliphaz by his experience proves himself to be little versed in the ways of God with His suffering people.

(5) Next follows the advice to Job, which is good, at least because it turns him to the only One who could give relief. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," therefore let him commit his cause to God. It is always good to advise men to trust in God; for He never fails those who trust in Him. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before Him." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." He is both powerful, good and kind, and can lift up those that are bowed down, refreshing their parched spirits as the rain refreshes the thirsty land. Therefore, taken in itself, this counsel is good; but remembering the underlying principle that Job is suffering for his sins, it can only irritate. It is as though he were to say—"Sin is common to all, as trouble is to all, therefore humble yourself as a sinner before God, and He shall exalt you." It is all the more subtle because it comes so near the truth—as Job will learn in due time. But there is no thought in the mind of Eliphaz like that produced in Job's heart by the sight of God, and which made him say at last, "I am vile."

(6) There may, or may not, be insinuations of craftiness in Job in this part; probably not. Eliphaz is formulating his theory, "Be good, and you will be happy in the long run." Job then would be vindicated, and all iniquity would have to stop its mouth. Indeed, Eliphaz and his friends must

find this out later, and these words are like a prophecy of what takes place when Job intercedes for them. Yes, God will surely triumph over evil, and will make His people "more than conquerors through Him that loved them:" but it will not be in man's way, and He alone will be exalted.

(7) The seventh and closing portion of the address is admirable in expression and excellent in its doctrine, if its inner meaning be seen. In the mouth of Eliphaz, as the culmination of his masterly address, it must be taken with all the modifications already spoken of.

Happy indeed is he who receives chastening at the loving hands of God; we are neither to despise nor to faint under such dealings. No matter how great or oft-repeated are the afflictions there will come deliverance in due time. How good it is to know this, and to "wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, for He will strengthen thy heart." Let the sufferer but say, "It is thy hand," "I know that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me." The Scriptures are full of this precious truth for the child of God. We are led to look past all apparent causes, all human instruments, or even Satan himself, and see that Hand which "will never cause His child a needless tear." So our blessed Lord took that great affliction, at the hands of God: "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

So the relief also comes from the same blessed source: "His hands make whole." How good it is to know that all — the trial and the relief — comes from Him. No matter how oft repeated the

strokes, protection and deliverance are our portion.

Passing to detail, Eliphaz mentions the sorest outward trials of famine and war, even to destruction, and those inner, bitter pains, from which Job was even then suffering, caused by the biting tongue; no noisome beast can injure, for when one is right with God He makes all things his friends. The habitation of the righteous abides secure, and his posterity shall bear witness to the faithfulness of God. Death but closes with calmness the beautiful picture—the aged saint gathered to his fathers like a shock of corn fully ripe. We can prolong the view in the clearer light of the New Testament, and ask: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Yes, we may look on beyond the death of the aged saint to the glorious resurrection, and catch the light of the bright hope of the Morning Star: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and we who are alive shall be *caught up* . . . to meet the Lord in the air."

But of all this neither Eliphaz nor Job thinks, and, as already said, the noble words of our chapter have not the same meaning to him as to us.

Job's reply to Eliphaz

In his reply to Eliphaz, as well as in those to each of the others, it is to be noted that Job addressed them unitedly, instead of individually. There is, indeed, an answer to the last speaker in each case, but Job evidently recognizes a unity of sentiment in the attitude of all three; each is the mouth-piece of all; and the answer is accordingly addressed to them collectively.

There is a marked resemblance between this first reply of Job, and the lament with which he began (chap. 3). Other matters enter in here, and there may be, perhaps, a greater measure of self-control in the utterances to Eliphaz, but the burden is the same; his affliction is unspeakably great, there is no possible cure, therefore death would be a welcome relief. There is no gleam of hope amid the gloom; faith is almost completely eclipsed for the time, and there is the sense of God's wrath which is the forerunner of a doubt of His goodness and justice. As to the friends also, there is the recognition of their failure to act the part of friends, which is paving the way for further alienation, ending in the rough recriminations which follow.

There are two general features in Job's reply, belonging respectively to the two chapters devoted to it (chaps. 6, 7). In chapter 6, the friends are more directly addressed, while in the latter half of the following chapter, he speaks to God. There is in the whole reply, however, a unity and continuity that encourages us to seek its divisions according to their numerical order and significance; thus:

(1) The reality of his sufferings (chap. 6: 1–7).
(2) Longing for death at God's hand (vers. 8–13).
(3) Friends manifested as useless (vers. 14–23).
(4) Let them truly test him (vers. 24–30).
(5) The brevity of life (chap. 7: 1–11).
(6) God his enemy (vers. 12–19).
(7) The appeal in view of sin (vers. 20, 21).

There is a certain measure of similarity between the contents of these divisions and those in the address of Eliphaz. In answer to the reproach for Job's despair, we have here his reason for it. Eliphaz speaks of God's favor to the righteous; Job rather craves death at His hand. Eliphaz has a solemn vision of the greatness and holiness of God; Job displays the inadequacy of his friends. In answer to the experience of the friends, Job desires that they would truly test him. In place of the exhortation to seek God, Job sets the misery and brevity of his life. Eliphaz reminds him of God's assured victory over all devices of the wicked, but Job can only reply that God is his enemy. The close of the friend's address is a beautiful declaration of the uses of affliction, but Job only answers that it does not seem to apply in his case, else why should not God forgive and show mercy? But we can compare the address and reply as we take up the latter in some detail.

(1) Eliphaz had reproached Job for succumbing to despair, but the patriarch asks him only to weigh his misery; it would be found, in the imagery elsewhere used of numerical greatness, as heavy as the sand of the sea. It is for this reason that his words are "rash"—which is probably the better render-

ing. Who can refrain from impetuous words when he is pierced with the arrows of the Almighty, and His terrors overshadow him?

Here we have the element in his sufferings which in intensity probably exceeds their physical aspect. It was the sense that God's wrath was upon him, that the dreadful virus of His indignation was consuming him, that gave a poignancy to his grief. We know this was a mistake, and that it was but another proof of the love of God that His poor servant was being thus chastened. But *he* did not know it, and we should not be harsh with one who felt that the Lord was dealing bitterly with him. Necessarily he could not have the full light that is now ours, and could not therefore "count it all joy" that he had fallen into such straits. But we can appeal to his own words, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" What has turned him from this resting-place? Dreadful doubts as to God's love and goodness have begun to gnaw at his heart with a pain beyond his bereavements and his sores.

One only, and He for no sin of His own, has felt the arrows of God piercing His holy soul. "Why hast thou forsaken Me?" He asks. But not for one moment does he doubt the holiness or goodness of God. "Thou art holy," suffices for Him, and in meekness He drinks the bitter cup; perfect in His sufferings, as in all else. God could not for a moment lay upon poor Job — though there was not another like him upon earth — the iniquity of mankind. Blessed be His name, of Another He can say, "I have found a ransom."

Job uses several figures to show that he has just cause for the complaints for which his friends reproach him. Even an ass or an ox will be content if he has his proper food. If he makes complaint, we know he has not received it. And can Job be expected to take his sufferings as if they were pleasant food—swallow them down, more nauseous than the slime of the egg? It is as though he said, "See what loathsome things are set before me, and can you expect me to eat them without a murmur?" His "sorrowful meat" was the things that his soul abhorred.

But is this the language of faith—even of Old Testament faith? What of that noble army of martyrs who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance . . . had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment . . . destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Heb. 11:35–38)? Would we expect to hear from these the repinings which fall from Job's lips? Paul could "take pleasure" in what fell upon him. But Job needs light, and must learn to trust God when he cannot understand Him.

(2) Job has but one thing to ask of God; that He would take his life. This, he says, would be a comfort, for his conscious rectitude would sustain him: he has not rejected God's words, has not been rebellious against Him. We have here, as throughout his long conflict, a statement of conscious uprightness. While true—as it was indeed the fruit of God's grace in him — Job is using this righteousness in a self-righteous way, to justify himself at the expense of *God's* righteousness; he

follows this course until he gets more bold in it. His friends indeed have no answer for it, but God will vindicate Himself.

This part closes with a pitiful plea of his utter weakness and helplessness, which should move the heart of his friends. Is his strength as the strength of stone or brass? Has he any help in himself?

(3) Most forcibly does the poor sufferer strike back at his unfeeling friends. It is a fundamental principle that pity should be shown to a sufferer by his friends, lest, under stress of trial — as some have rendered it — "he should forsake the fear of the Almighty." Agur therefore prayed that he might be preserved from extreme poverty, "Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30:9). But the hard principle they were applying knew no mercy, felt no sympathy. At the time of his dire need they manifested themselves as utterly unfitted to be friends. The "brother born for adversity" they are not. These "brethren" are like a summer stream, swollen by melting snow and ice in winter, which gives promise of perennial supply for the thirsty, but when the troops of travelers come, they find only the dry stones to mock them. Yet he had asked nothing unreasonable at their hands—no money, nor rescue from the enemy, only a little sympathy.

It was indeed most disappointing. Eliphaz might speak in lofty language of the greatness and faithfulness of *God*, but what about himself; was he acting the part of a true friend? As thus manifested, Job might say of them, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me." And when these failed,

he could not add, "*Thou* art with me." How differently speaks Paul: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood by me" (2 Tim. 4: 16, 17). Let us learn from Job's failure not to put the dearest earthly friend between us and God.

"Earthly friends may fail and leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us,
Oh, how *He* loves!"

(4) Eliphaz had spoken of his observation and experience, Job now asks that true tests be applied to his own case. Let them prove, according to their rigid rule of "punishment for sin," that *he is* the sinner. Theories are all very well in their place, but if based on false premises they utterly fail. "How forcible are *right* words!" Let them teach him according to truth, and he will be silent; but of what value is all their arguing? They are taking his poor, rash, desperate speeches, forced from him in the desperation of his sufferings, and treating them as if they were the well-considered statements of one who was propounding some philosophic principle. Why could they not make allowance for the anguish which wrings from him utterances which are as "windy words?" They were treating him in the same unfeeling way that marks those who would despoil the fatherless: for were they not trying to engulf him, their friend, and make him out to be like the wicked? These are indeed strong words, but there is a good measure of justification for them. There was a studied

heartlessness about the cold words of Eliphaz that seems to furnish ground for the bitterness of Job's charge. A little later it will be seen that they speak exactly as Job here accuses; he only anticipates their full meaning.

In contrast with their injustice, let them look deliberately at him: is he lying when he protests his uprightness? Let them return from their wholesale charges of evil against him, to the simple and self-evident fact that he is upright, with no iniquity that can explain the tortures to which he is now subjected. *He* can discern evil, and would not hide it, though it were in himself.

Thus he bids them "try again," as the word has been rendered, and be fair in their judgment, and see if they can explain the strange anomaly of a good man suffering as he does. It is as great a mystery to him as to them.

We have here the habitual state of Job's mind throughout all his controversy with his friends. There is a sense of moral rectitude, of genuine fear of God, which he cannot deny. It is the testimony of a good conscience, and it stands as a rock against all the outrageous suspicions and accusations. He holds fast his integrity, and thus proves the falseness of Satan's malicious charge, and the error of the friends' principles. Incidentally he disproves his own theory, for he too had thought as they. Indeed, *his* solution, from which he utterly shrank, was worse than theirs. For surely it is better that *Job* should fall than *God's* honor be touched.

(5) Having challenged his friends to test him, Job now returns to dwell upon his sufferings in view

of the brevity of life. These sleepless nights of "tossings to and fro" through months of unrelieved pain, make him long for that "appointed time" for all flesh, with the eager desire of a hireling waiting for the close of his day's work. Already there are the harbingers of the grave upon him, the worm and the clod; any slight healing of his sores is but the signal for a fresh outbreak of loathsomeness. Like the swift passing of the shuttle in the weaver's loom, so pass his painful days. Soon they will see him no more, and his life will melt away as the cloud in the blue sky.

This is beautifully poetic, and true so far as man's view is concerned. "As a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." It is the dirge of human existence since sin has brought in death. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him" (Ps. 103:15–18). Ah, Job sees but the dark side, for while turning to God as he does here, it is not of mercy but of wrath that he speaks.

(6) God is his enemy, watching as if he were the tossing sea, ready to overleap its bounds, or some monster of the waters to be taken and destroyed. Day and night His hand was heavy upon him. The fitful sleep as he tossed upon his couch was intolerable by reason of the terrifying dreams which God sent, so that strangling was preferable to the choking dread that filled his soul with terror. Poor sufferer! And he was attributing it to his best Friend!

So he abhors life, and would not live alway. He

asks—but in how different a way from the Psalmist: What is poor, puny man that Thou shouldst thus afflict him, that he scarce has time to draw a quiet breath—"to swallow down my spittle?" Sad indeed is the case of one who can find no relief even in God.

(7) At last Job will speak of his sin, though most briefly. "I have sinned;" but it is not the true acknowledgment of penitence, rather a hypothetical statement. Granted that I have sinned, what is that to Thee, O watcher of men? Why dost Thou seek me as a mark for Thy weapons instead of pardoning and restoring me to my former prosperity? Instead of that Thou watchest me until I shall sleep in the dust; then I shall be free from the intolerable burden of thy sore afflictions. Such seems to be the meaning of this concluding part. In the writhings of his soul-anguish, Job does not hesitate to accuse God. If he has sinned why does God punish instead of showing mercy? Truly such challenges cannot be allowed to pass.

Thus the first reply closes. It is full of bitterness against man and God. Justified partly in what he says of *man*, Job appears throughout as one whose sufferings had absorbed him in selfishness. He sees no mercy in God, and therefore the only future he dwells upon is one of escape from His presence. This is not even an Old Testament view of the future, as we have already seen, but the one-sided view of a morbidly wretched man. We pity him, though, thank God, he no longer needs it, but we cannot endorse his unbelief. He too will ere long tell a different story, and out of his sorrow will come the morning of joy.

2. *Bildad's address and Job's reply*

The first of the friends has spoken and been answered by Job. Bildad now takes up what is fast becoming a controversy. There is perhaps less of the courtesy and dignity which marked the speech of Eliphaz, together with some harshness toward Job, caused apparently by the bitter charge of the latter against God. With all his ignorance of divine principles, Bildad is jealous of the honor of God, and cannot allow Him to be accused. In this he is surely right, but he fails to convince Job because of the root error in the thoughts, indeed, of them all: God must punish sin, and Job must be a sinner for he is being punished.

To establish this, Bildad refers not merely to his own experience as had Eliphaz, but calls upon all the gathered wisdom of the past for confirmation. What is God's way with the wicked? And does He not recompense the way of the righteous unto him?

In reply Job is more subdued, and practically acknowledges the truth of Bildad's contention as to God's ways, but gives a twist to the whole by saying that God's justice is nothing but His power in another form. No one can maintain his cause before Him, because He is almighty, and can not be reached. His judgments are arbitrary, but no one can question them, nor is there a daysman, an advocate, to plead the cause of the wretched. This brings Job back to his original complaint and longing for death. We will now briefly examine the details of each of these speeches.

Bildad's Address.

This may be divided into five parts, suggesting the righteousness of God's judgments and the certainty of His recompense, both upon the wicked and the just.

(1) He reproaches Job (vers. 1, 2).
(2) Is God unjust? (vers. 3–7).
(3) The light of the past (vers. 8–10).
(4) The way of the wicked (vers. 11–19).
(5) Divine recompense for the righteous (vers. 20–22).

(1) Job's words are like a strong wind, a blast of bitter complaint, and still more bitter charge against God. How long is he going to utter such things? This is a harsh, but, we may well say, just, correction of the irreverent and extreme rashness of Job's words. Perhaps sympathy might have pursued a gentler course, but when a man begins to charge God it is well to rebuke him sharply.

(2) Bildad asks Job a plain question, "Doth God pervert judgment?" Is He unrighteous? For anyone who knows Him there can be but one answer. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He would not *be* God, if He were not perfectly righteous. This shows the dreadful precipice to which Job was approaching, goaded on by this false principle that God always punishes for sin. Job was not a sinner; therefore God was unjust! Fearful reasoning this, in which both the premise and the statement of fact are wrong and in which the conclusion is blasphemous. Why did

not Job, and Bildad also, pause and ask if there was not something wrong in the premise: *Does* God always punish for sin alone? Why does not Job consider the statement of facts; *is* he sinless? But this will come out in due time. We will follow Bildad.

He proposes two proofs of God's justice, the first of which is, to say the least, most arbitrary and unkind. We may read verse 4, "When thy children sinned against Him, He gave them over to the hand of their wickedness." In other words Bildad assumes that Job's children had reaped the due reward of their wickedness, and had been cut off; "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." This is indeed most lacerating to a parent's feelings, who had found no evidence of such wickedness in his children, and who had carefully watched over their spiritual state. Bildad is driven to this by his wrong theory of God's ways.

Next, he proves the justice of those ways by telling Job there is restoring mercy for him, if he will but turn in prayer to God—"If thou *art* pure and upright"—there is a strong suggestion of suspicion here—God will restore all, and bless Job's latter end. This indeed was fulfilled, but in a vastly different way from what Bildad expected; Job is blessed not for his purity, nor because of confession of suspected evil.

(3) Bildad here seeks confirmation of his contention from the wisdom of past ages. He goes beyond Eliphaz, "For we are but as children of yesterday." While this is true, what does the gar-

nered wisdom of all the past give us when it is a question of *God's* truth? It is not to the past that we are to turn, but to God and His word. How immeasurably superior is the position of those who have the "sure word of prophecy," "the oracles of God."

(4) In this portion Bildad traces the way of the wicked; and there is much truth in what he says, though it is not all the truth. Can the water-reed, or papyrus, flourish without moisture? It grows luxuriantly when water is about its roots; as soon as that is exhausted, it withers more quickly than all other herbs. So is the prosperity of the wicked, who for a time spreads himself as a green bay tree. The hope of the ungodly—not merely the hypocrite—perisheth. Changing his figure, Bildad likens the confidence of the wicked to one leaning upon a spider's web; how pitiable is the plight of one vainly clinging to so frail a thing! Once more in the exuberance of his metaphors, he likens this passing prosperity to a luxuriant vine covering a heap of stones in the garden, filled with sap and vigor in the bright sunshine. Soon God cuts him off, and "the place that once knew him shall know him no more." Others shall take his place.

(5) Lastly Bildad reminds Job of the sure recompense for the righteous. God will not join hands with evil doers by punishing the righteous; He will fill Job's mouth with laughter and his tongue with singing, and all iniquity shall stop its mouth, if—

Job's reply to Bildad.

Job's reply, beginning in quietness, passing on to bitter charges of God, and ending in a wail, may be divided into seven parts; he sounds all the heights and depths of misery in this complete survey of his case.

(1) God supreme; who can contend with Him? (vers. 1–4).
(2) His resistless power (vers. 5–10).
(3) His inaccessibility, and arbitrary dealing (vers. 11–24).
(4) Job's utter weakness (vers. 25–28).
(5) Longing for a daysman (vers. 29–35).
(6) The complaint against God (ch. 10: 1–17).
(7) Longing for death (vers. 18–22).

(1) Although he speaks quietly, there is an intense bitterness in what Job says here. Apparently agreeing with Bildad that God is just, Job says, "Of course He is just, for there is no appeal from whatever He does. He has both wisdom and power, and can overwhelm any vain attempt to reason with Him." This is terrible. It is not one presuming in all lowliness to ask God for a reason, as Jeremiah under similar circumstances does (Jer. 12: 1–4), but rather the hardness of despair—might is right; and God has might on His side.

(2) In this part Job enlarges upon the power and greatness of God. The language is noble, the description true, but underneath lies the awful doubt of this great and powerful Being's goodness. God overturns the unconscious mountains in His wrath; He makes the earth to tremble. Passing from

earth to heaven, He causes the sun and stars to cease their shining. Returning to earth He walks upon the raging waves of the sea. He is the Creator of those distant glorious constellations—Arcturus in the north; Orion "sloping downward toward the west;" Pleiades in the east, and the unknown "chambers of the south," toward the horizon and beyond view. These are marvelous sweeps of language, taking in the whole heavens; but, alas, it is not, "The heavens declare the glory of God," but rather a declaration of absolute, resistless Power.

(3) Coming to the heart of his trouble, Job declares, in language whose poetic beauty is only exceeded by the misery of his plaint, that he can have no access to this great and mighty Being who hides Himself, and gives no account to any of His ways. He passes by, viewless as the winds; He deals in anger, but none can ask a reason, not even the "proud helpers"—the "helpers of Rahab" (Egypt), they can only bow under Him. How much less can poor Job address Him, even though he knew the righteousness of his cause, save as a cringing suppliant before his Judge! He would scarcely believe it if God did answer him, but would expect rather to be crushed in a tempest and further wounded without cause—beaten down into bitter helplessness, and not suffered to take a breath! Yes, if it is strength you speak of, "He is strong;" if justice, "Who will plead with Him?" Job adds, even if he were right, his own mouth would be forced to condemn him; and if he were perfect God would declare him guilty! Even if he knew

himself innocent, he is all at sea and despairs of his life. God is a destroyer alike of guilty and innocent, at whose passing away He mocks. The earth is in the hands of the wicked: is it not so? Who else has done this unrighteousness? Oh Job, for these words thou shalt yet abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes.

(4) Identifying himself with the innocent sufferers at whose passing away God laughs, Job describes his own utter weakness, and the brevity of his life. He has forgotten all his former prosperity, and draws similes of the evanescence of life from earth and sea and sky. His days are like the swift postman who runs with his message; like the ships, passing along the horizon; or like an eagle swiftly dashing out of sight in pursuit of prey. At the suggestion that he forget his troubles and try to look bravely forward, as Bildad had urged, he can but shudder at his sorrows, his pains, for he knows God will not hold him innocent. So he is held in his misery as in a vise.

(5) Continuing, Job hints that there is no use in his making any effort to clear himself: if he is already pronounced wicked, he labors in vain to convince God that he is not; he may wash his hands in innocency, in snow water, only to be taken by this resistless Power and plunged into the ditch! Vain are all efforts to alter the judgment, and oh —where is there a daysman, a mediator who could enter into judgment, laying his hands upon God and Job alike? Consumed with terror, Job cannot speak. Thank God, we know, as Job later knew in part, that there is such a Daysman.

(6) Words fail to describe the misery of Job which would lead him to speak thus against God. It is not the bodily suffering which has wrung this bitter cry from him, but he has lost, or is in danger of losing, faith in God's goodness. There is scarcely a gleam of light in his whole speech, and in the closing part (chap. 10) he lets himself loose in the dark despair which has settled down upon his soul. He is weary of life, and might as well pour out all his thoughts against God. He does not stand, as the poet has described a despairing man,

> "Deep into that darkness peering,
> Long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
> Dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before,"

but rather pours out all those thoughts before the eye of God. May not this very abandonment of misery suggest the root of faith in his heart? He will at least tell God to His face that he doubts Him: "though He slay me." He will ask God why He thus contends with him — is it any pleasure to Him to despise the work of His own hands, and allow the wicked to go unpunished? Does God judge according to the flesh, failing to see the inward parts? Are His days so brief that He must punish evil before it is manifested—nay, when He *knows* a man is innocent? "Wilt Thou pursue a worm to death?" Will He take the frail being whom His hands have fashioned with such skill, as the delicate clots of milk—as the "curiously wrought" substance of skin and flesh, bones and sinews (see Ps. 139: 15, 16), and bring them back to their parent dust? God has given him breath

and life, and yet has hidden enmity in His heart against His own handiwork!

> "Thou madest death; and lo, Thy foot
> Is on the skull that Thou hast made."

If he sins, God would note it, and woe be to him; if he is innocent he dare not lift his head, for God would quickly hunt him as a fierce lion seeking his prey. God would display His wondrous power, and bring up witnesses against him like a countless host of invaders. In other words Job declares he is at the mercy of an almighty, arbitrary enemy!

(7) And so this awful plaint goes on to its close. The wailing passes from blaming God for His injustice to lamenting his birth. Pitifully, Job asks a brief respite, a surcease of sorrow before he goes hence and is no more. It is the lament again of chapter 3.

3.—*Zophar's Address and Job's Reply.* (chaps. 11–14.)

It has been thought, with some degree of probability, that Zophar was the youngest of the three friends. He is the last to speak, and his address, while of the same general character as that of the other two, is more intense, lacking in the dignity of Eliphaz and in the argumentative ability of Bildad. He may be said to make up in vehemence what he lacks in reason, and this leads him into harshness and brutal rudeness ill calculated to soothe the sore spirit of the sufferer. Besides this, he, in common with the other three, utterly fails

to explain the dark enigma of Job's trouble, and by his theory of suffering being for sins committed, plunges the already distracted man more deeply into the darkness.

In his reply, Job far exceeds Zophar in breadth of thought as well as in vigor of expression. Indeed, it may be remarked that in *all* the controversy Job has the advantage. This does not mean that he had greater ability than his friends, but that their views were narrower. This confined them to a narrow scope, where each one was compelled to reiterate in some form the statements of his predecessor. On the other hand Job, while without the key which will solve the mystery of his sufferings, takes far wider flights. He goes beyond his friends in their own theme, and passes from that to higher, though more dreadful, thoughts. It can be seen that his mental suffering is intense, as he is driven by his very theory, which is that of the others, to question the goodness and the justice of God. While they falsely accuse him of evil he knows he is guiltless, and this drives him nearer to the awful rocks of regarding God as using His almighty power in an arbitrary and unjust way. Will he suffer shipwreck, or shall his faith hold even over the chasm of his doubts?

Zophar's Address.

The similarity of Zophar's address to that of Bildad can be gathered from the divisions into which it falls.

(1) Job's torrent of words rebuked (vers. 1–6).

(2) The greatness of God (vers. 7–9).

(3) All things open to Him (vers. 10–12).
(4) The call to repent (vers. 13–15).
(5) The peaceable results (vers. 16–20).

(1) It is surely most unfair to characterize the writhings of an evidently upright soul as "a multitude (or torrent) of words," and himself as "a man of lips." What fairness is there in calling Job's cries out of the depths "lies," or his keen thrusts as "mockery"? On the other hand, Job had indeed declared himself and his doctrine pure, and could Zophar have disproved this it would have gone far to help the matter. But without proof he charges Job with being such a grievous sinner that even his present sufferings were less than his desert, and he would associate *God* with this dreadful charge. While perfectly true that divine wisdom is double our highest thoughts of it, he cannot associate that wisdom with unfair suspicions or unjust charges.

(2) This, the finest part of the address, is an enlargement upon what he had just said. He associates divine wisdom with God the Almighty, as in Prov. 8; but he does not carry the thought as far as in that sublime passage, where we see wisdom personified in the Son of God. It is, however, a noble description of God, and we can hardly avoid the conviction that a man who could speak thus was not ignorant of the true God. Ascend up to heaven, we find Wisdom; descend into Sheol, it is still there; the earth for length, the sea for breadth, cannot compass the measure of this attribute of God. We are reminded of two passages, Ps. 139 in

the Old Testament, and Eph. 3 in the New, where the presence and power of God are similarly described. But the Psalmist rejoices in that he cannot

"Drift beyond His love and care;"

and in the New Testament, we are overwhelmed, not by a dark and inscrutable mystery or an implacable avenger, but by "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

(3) We can only bow to the truth that God is the searcher of hearts, and that nothing can escape His all-seeing eye. He knows the empty vanity of the natural man's heart, who by birth is as a wild ass's colt, and needs to be born again if any true knowledge of God is to be had. This interpretation of ver. 12 seems to give a clear and consistent meaning.

(4) But Zophar spoils the dignity of what he had just said, by calling upon Job to repent as an evildoer having a store of ill-gotten wealth in his tents. It is this utter lack of discrimination that stirs Job to anger, and discloses the superficial nature of the friends' theory.

(5) The conclusion is like singing songs to one who is heavy of heart. Zophar paints a beautiful outcome—as imaginary as were the sins imputed to Job. He would then forget his present troubles, which would slip by him as passing waters; his darkness would be turned to light; he would have security and prosperity, and former calumniators would bow before him. Little did Zophar and his friend dream that *they* would have to come to this. The closing verse is a warning which Zophar no doubt applies to Job.

Job's Reply.

The fulness of Job's response to Zophar is striking. In it he practically turns from his friends to God; but alas, to find no answer to his awful terror of doubt and darkness. The discourse may be divided into three main parts.

(1) He answers his friends (chaps. 12: 1—13: 13).

(2) He challenges God (chap. 13: 14–28).

(3) A hope of immortality amid despair (chap. 14).

(1) Stung by the charges and platitudes of the friends, Job meets them with bitter sarcasm, followed quickly by the charge of their mocking him. *They* are at ease, while cherishing their unjust suspicions of him. He almost compares them to robbers, who hold their booty undisturbed (vers. 1–6).

Creation—in earth and air and sea—will confirm him in witnessing that God is everywhere and does everything. His deduction from this, however, leads him dangerously near charging God with being the author of evil. He would appeal to age and experience to confirm this. If he means simply that God is omnipotent, all would at once acquiesce, but the words following show that his gloomy mind and distorted vision are dwelling upon the dark side of nature. It is in this that his danger lies (vers. 7–13).

None, no matter how exalted, can escape Him. He breaks down, and ruin is the result. He shuts, and none can open; He withholds water and a drought results, or releases it only to overwhelm in a flood. All—judges, kings, princes and priests —are held up to contempt by this Almighty One.

Truly this is right, if they deserve it, but Job omits that side (vers. 14–21).

Similarly, the nations rise and fall at His word. It is indeed a great but most sombre picture of omnipotence. We can only shudder at the awful sight. Job's misery has cast a baleful light upon all God's greatness. How different is the language of faith: "God is our refuge and strength . . . therefore will we not fear . . . Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46). This closes the reply to the second part of Zophar's speech upon the greatness of God (vers. 22–25).

Next, Job boldly charges his friends with being false witnesses for God, in that they used well-known truths with which all were familiar, to confirm their charge of Job's wickedness. What kind of physicians were they to treat a case like this? They have decided what his disease is, and misrepresent his symptoms to confirm their diagnosis! And they bring in their theory of God's invariable punishment for sin in this life to prove that Job *is* a sinner! Job turns from them in disgust (ch. 13: 1–5). He warns them of the unrighteousness of their course. They presume to lie for God! For are they not falsely accusing an innocent man? Are they not afraid to trifle with truth, and will not God deal with them?—for they are but men. Poor Job, he is the victim of the same false theory, and is in danger of blasphemously charging God with injustice. He seems to feel his danger, but he *must* speak; so he turns from man's unjust surmisings to God (vers. 6–13).

(2) So the frail creature takes his life in his hand

and stands before his Maker. God can but strike dead one who has no hope, but Job must speak out and maintain his ways as upright before God. This is the thought which seems most in accord with what goes before. On the other hand, many, perhaps most, prefer the rendering of our Authorized Version: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." If it should be rendered thus, it would be a gleam of light in the midst of awful darkness, and seems to agree with what follows. Conscious of personal rectitude, Job seems to think that there may be hope. At any rate, he must speak (vers. 14–19).

But how dare he speak before that One from whose presence he would instinctively flee? Let Him at least remove the awful dread that chills Job's heart, and relieve him of his pain, and he will answer or address Him. How these words, beautiful in their very anguish, cry aloud for the blessed Daysman, the Mediator! Blessed be God, *we* can "come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Job could only grope in darkness:"

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

So he appeals, and is ready to ask for charges against him (vers. 20–23).

And yet immediately he renews his charges against God, for he is not yet ready to be stripped of all his fancied righteousness. God holds him as an enemy; drives him as a withered leaf before the blast; accuses him of those almost forgotten sins of

youth (ah, Job, it seems that even you must acknowledge there have been sins); He watches him, and makes his fancied robe of righteousness look like a moth-eaten garment. So Job charges his Maker, and does not pause to hear what He will reply (vers. 24–28).

(3) The close of this address, bringing to an end the first series in the controversy, is a most beautiful dirge, descriptive of the frailty and uncertainty of human life. Man cometh up like a flower, and is cut down and withereth. We are listening to the wail of the 90th psalm, but without its faith in God, and not yet followed by the triumph of the 91st psalm.

But how sadly true are vers. 1, 2! And will the mighty God enter into judgment with such a frail creature—not only frail but impure by nature! Ah, let Job ponder well his own words. But he passes on in self-pity to beg that he be let alone for a little, until as a hireling he completes his day! (vers. 3–6).

Looking onward to death, Job expresses the hopelessness of man by contrast with the rejuvenation of trees which, though cut down, send up fresh shoots from their roots. But it is not so with man; he breathes his last, and where is he? He lies down and rises no more, so long as earth and heaven remain. This is not exactly the language of unbelief, nor yet of faith. It is one speaking as a man, and of things upon earth. It resembles much the thought in Ecclesiastes: "That which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten" (Eccl. 2: 16). Thank God, even in the Old Testament there was more light (vers. 7–12).

Job next seems to give expression to a hope—vague and marred by evil thoughts of God—of a bright hereafter. He desires to be hidden from God in Sheol until this mighty Being had changed His mind and ceased to pursue His creature. Job would patiently wait till that change came. *Then*, God would regard him; but now He only watched him in enmity! Inexpressibly sad is this, for a man who knew God. But such is unbelief even in a saint. We can catch the gleam of faith in the desire and the question, and know that one day Job will see clearly, and repent of these utterances (vers. 13–17).

Again the darkness shuts down upon his soul, and Job describes man as a mountain once strong, but now prostrate, and worn away by the onrushing waters. Death's shadow falls upon the face once bright and smiling, and we bury our dead out of our sight. A man's sons come to honor and are brought low, but "the dead know not anything." A man lives, suffers, groans and dies—and that is all!

> "Oh, life as futile, then, as frail—
> What hope for answer or redress?"

And so Job ends his series of replies to the first assault of his friends. Little has been gained but a sense of the injustice of man and an awful suspicion of God on Job's part, and on the part of his friends a determination to press him further with charges of sin and wickedness until he shall break down. Thus are we by no means at the end of our book.

Section 2.—The second addresses of the friends—suspicions and charges; Job rises from despair to hope (chaps. 15–21).

There is practically little new in this second series of the friends' addresses. Indeed, the principle to which they were committed gave little room for new or wider thoughts. They could only reiterate their contention, cite the teachings of others and their own experience and observation, with varied, true and beautiful illustrations drawn from many sources. But the narrowness of their view vitiates all they say, for they are seeking to reach a conclusion entirely contrary to facts. We need not wonder therefore that the discussion loses the courtesy which to some extent marked its beginning, and takes on more the character of threatening and denunciation. They will make up in vehemence and brutality what they lack in proof; they will crush Job by the weight of their charges, and in this way vindicate their own attitude. It is noteworthy also that the appeal to God has less the ring of sincerity and of applicability in it. There is no progress, and each plows in the furrow made by his predecessor.

We may note also that no promises are held out to Job, as at the first, upon his repentance. In their eagerness to convict him they seem to lose sight of a possible recovery. And if the element of hope is wanting, what is left? So their charges but tend to produce despair.

While they all follow the same line of thought, the individuality of each speaker is apparent. Eliphaz enlarges upon the principle that God surely

punishes the evil-doer in this life: Bildad emphasizes this without even a semblance of argument; while Zophar with his accustomed vehemence depicts the inevitable doom of the wicked in spite of short-lived prosperity.

On the other hand Job meets each one on his own ground, and gives scorn for scorn, stroke for stroke, charge for charge. In addition, he enlarges upon the anomaly of his unspeakable sufferings in connection with his reiterated innocence. He not only charges his friends with hardness and impiety, but cannot hide the awful fact from himself that *God* is against him. It is this that burns in his soul—the suspicion that God is not good and just.

And yet the faint flashes of faith we have already seen, break out here into brighter hope. The very fact that he appeals to God, bringing his doubts and fears to Him, shows that faith has not failed, and cannot. Therefore we find here the noble outburst, which has expressed the faith of the saints of all ages—"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Yet Job's enigma is not solved, and the dark shadow of death looms before him, with little to cheer. But we must not anticipate.

The section falls, as the first, into three parts, the address of each friend with Job's reply.

1. Eliphaz: the inevitable judgment of the wicked in this life. Job's reply (chaps. 15–17).

2. Bildad: the sure doom of the wicked. Job's reply (chaps. 18, 19).

3. Zophar: the certain and terrible doom of the wicked, in spite of short-lived prosperity. Job's reply (chaps. 20, 21).

1. *Eliphaz's Address*

As already remarked, Eliphaz loses in this second address the measure of courtesy and hopefulness he had shown at first. We may divide what he says into 5 parts:

(1) Job self-condemned (chap. 15: 1–6).
(2) Is he wiser or better than others? (vers. 7–13).
(3) The holiness of God (vers. 14–16).
(4) The experience of the wicked (vers. 17–24).
(5) Their retribution (vers. 25–35).

(1) Is it wisdom, he asks, for one who presumes to be wise, to pour out empty words like a blast of the east wind—a dry, withering thing? Job had indeed laid himself open to the charge of casting off fear, in his intemperate language, which was the opposite of prayer or devotion. His own words, says Eliphaz, confirm the suspicions and charges of the friends—of wickedness and impiety. But in accusing Job of craftiness, he charges what is untrue; for the poor sufferer had poured out his wretchedness with no regard for consequences. Whatever he is, Job is no hypocrite.

(2) He next challenges Job: Where has he gained superior wisdom to them? Has *he* been in the secret counsel of God from the beginning, before the earth and hills were made? Only divine Wisdom, the eternal Son, could claim such a relation to God as that (Prov. 8). As for Job, he is like themselves, only with less experience than many to whom Eliphaz could appeal. Being no wiser than others, why does he refuse the "consolations of God" which these friends were ministering to

him? It certainly requires a stretch of imagination to call their galling words—like vinegar upon nitre—by such a tender term. The second part of this verse should probably reiterate the first, "And the word gently spoken to thee?" Why, he asks, does Job's eyes flash the rebellion of his wayward heart, instead of bowing to the charges of the friends? This he reckons as turning from God—a charge of heresy against one who does not bow to his inquisitors—which is common enough.

(3) Eliphaz repeats the statement of his first address as to the holiness of God (chap. 4: 17–19). Truly none is like unto Him in whose presence the seraphim veil their faces, as they cry, "Holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." If the very heavens are unclean in His sight, how much less is mortal sinful man! But is not *Eliphaz* one of these, as well as the poor sufferer? Why then apply it to Job as though it proved *him* a sinner above all others? This, surely, is more like crafty speech than all the hot utterances of Job. Let Eliphaz take his place beside Job and confess that he too is "abominable and filthy." The poor sufferer might have responded to that.

(4) Eliphaz next takes the familiar ground of experience and observation, calling to his aid those wise men whose freedom from foreign admixture made them especially authoritative. This wisdom, he assures Job, has discovered the wretchedness of the wicked. A sword, as of Damocles, ever hangs over their guilty head; even in outward prosperity the dreadful knell of doom sounds in their ear. The evil man has no hope of escaping the darkness;

while he seeks his food, he expects the blow to fall —the "king of terrors" will smite him. Is Eliphaz trying to terrify Job, or is it an echo of the distant fears of his own heart?

(5) He concludes the dreadful picture with a narration of the retributive consequences of awful impiety. This imaginary wicked person had stretched out his hand against the Almighty; with stiff neck, and thick bosses of wickedness as a shield, dared to defy God! He had enjoyed the temporary good things of life, his eyes stood out with fatness, he had lived in houses marked for desolation without a thought of change, but his substance fails, the darkness falls, the fire reaches him, and he perishes at the breath of God! Fearsome picture indeed—and he thinks he is describing Job! We might say he is subjecting the poor distracted sufferer to the "third degree" of probing and accusation to make him cry out for very terror. He lingers over the picture: Let the wicked not trust in vanity, for it shall be his recompense. His branch shall wither, his fruit shall be cast off, hypocrisy and bribery shall receive their appointed penalty!

Could anyone but an innocent man stand up under the awful thunder of such denunciation? Were Job the man they have determined him to be, he must be crushed beneath the dreadful avalanche. But what has *he* to answer?

Job's Reply

Two things strike us in his answer to Eliphaz: First, nothing that has been said has touched Job's conscience, and this accounts for his moral indig-

nation against his accusers. Second, he is so occupied with his relationship to God that other things are of minor importance. This shows the reality of the man's faith—he *must* understand God. This indeed is the main theme of the entire book—the vindication of God's ways and of His holiness in dealing with men.

We may divide this reply, as we did the address of Eliphaz, into five parts:

(1) He reproaches them for their heartlessness (ch. 16: 1–5).
(2) Under the wrath of God and the hatred of man (vers. 6–14).
(3) He appeals to God in it all (vers. 15–22).
(4) The experience of bitter trial (ch. 17: 1–12).
(5) The dark outlook toward the grave (vers. 13–16).

(1) Eliphaz had spoken of their addresses to Job (of that part, doubtless, which promised restoration upon repentance) as "the consolations of God;" Job characterizes them as "miserable comforters." Is there to be no end of windy words? Had the friends not exhausted their stock of accusations? What stirs up Eliphaz to speak further, with nothing new to say? Job himself could easily treat them after their fashion, were conditions reversed; but he would on the contrary have sought to impart consolation.

The friends had certainly laid themselves open to this rebuke. They have violated all the God-given safeguards of friendship, had given the lie to all their former confidence, and treated Job as a stranger of whom they knew nothing, and whose

past life could only be deduced from his present condition. It was indeed an outrage upon the name of friendship, and we can well sympathize with the disappointment and indignation of Job at such treatment. His life had been lived before them in all uprightness, and now to be accused by them of hypocrisy was bitter indeed. How cruel is the goading of conscience under a false principle!

If we turn to another Sorrow, compared with which Job's anguish was as nothing, what do we find there but meekness, patience, confidence in God, in the face of bitter enmity from those who "laid things to my charge which I knew not;" "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." In this, as in all else, there is none like Him.

(2) Turning to God, in whom he should have found abundant consolation, Job charges Him as the author of his misery and suffering, But his complaint and hot words give him no relief. "*Thou* hast made desolate all my company," or household. His emaciated body he counts as evidence of the wrath of God which tears him as would a beast! Truly, Job does not measure his words. He sees only bitter suffering inflicted without cause, and is unwilling or unable to trust God in the dark. This is Job's great error, and linked with it a protestation of righteousness as if *he* deserved credit for that. Here lies something to be probed into, which all the insinuations and charges of his friends cannot touch. How can the root of this trouble be reached?

In his blind misery Job links the scoffs of the un-

godly, glad at his calamity, with the hand of God. It is difficult in these words of Job to separate between God and evil men; in his blurred view they are all acting together. What awful language to use of God: "He hath also taken me by my neck and shaken me to pieces"—like a wild beast rending its prey, or a mighty giant running upon a puny victim to destroy it.

Let us read the account of our Lord's sufferings at the hands of man and of God, and we find no confusing of the two, nor any charging God with evil. "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion . . . My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet . . . But be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me" (Ps. 22: 12–19). God had been His trust from infancy; His soul still rested upon His goodness and righteousness when all the waves and billows of judgment rolled over Him.

> "Oh, what a load was Thine to bear,
> Alone in that dark hour;
> Our sins in all their terror there,
> God's wrath and Satan's power."

Let everything go—man's favor, life itself, and the smile of God—out of the gloom and thick blackness of God's forsaking we hear a cry reaching to the throne of the Eternal, "THOU ART HOLY." Blessed be God for One who, while suffering thus

for us, did not swerve from perfect trust in Him who had forsaken Him for our sakes.

(3) Poor Job fails to see God in His unchanging love through all these sufferings, and each pang he endures, every tear he sheds, all the humiliation to which he is subjected, is a fresh charge against God. And yet, not altogether, for there is real faith in his heart. While he would let his blood cry for vengeance like Abel's, he instinctively knows there is a just God in heaven who has the record of his life, to whom he can appeal against the false charges of his friends. He knows, not fully, for He has not yet seen, that there is One who pleads for him before God. What *he* longs for, *we* know that we have—One that pleads for us with God as a man pleads for his neighbor. *We* know a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

But the very fact that Job longs for such an intercessor shows the faith hidden in his soul, which will soon say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Meanwhile he looks down to the grave, without a pause for God to speak to him.

(4) He is marked for death, his very breath declares the corruption for which the grave yawns; and "friends" stand by and mock!

In the next verse (ch. 17: 3), Job turns from man to God. Men are ignorant and mere flatterers who cannot be trusted—or, as it has been rendered, "He who giveth his friends for spoil, the eyes of his children shall languish." Thus he threatens his friends for their disloyalty.

Again he mars his testimony by charging his misery upon God as well as man, and declaring that upright persons are stumbled by his sufferings. However, in spite of all, Job keeps on his steadfast way. In relation to the assault of the friends, however, there is a tone of self-complacency which is not exactly suitable to the truly lowly. Verse 10 seems to be a challenge to continue their assaults, since they utterly fail in the discernment which marks the wise. They are holding out light to him, if penitent, while he is drawing ever nearer to death.

(5) His face is now turned toward the gloom of death, with scant gleam of hope of anything beyond. Evidently his spirit has not yet found rest, and victory is not yet his. But, unlike the friends, he sometimes has his face in the right direction, and were his mouth but closed long enough to hear God speaking to him, he would see the full deliverance which comes to those who justify the Lord.

But how doleful are his thoughts; he is related to corruption and the worm, and hope finds little that is congenial amid such dark and gruesome surroundings.

2. *Bildad's Second Address, and Job's Reply.* (chaps. 18, 19.)

The principal difference between Bildad's address and that of Eliphaz is the brevity of the former. He follows the lead of Eliphaz largely, but in a manner all his own. His address abounds in beautiful poetic imagery and true declarations as to the inevitable doom of the wicked; but it is beside the

mark in that it utterly fails to establish any relation between Job and the wicked whose end he so graphically describes. His address may be divided into six portions, the last being a brief concluding word.

(1) Fresh reproach (chap. 18 : 1–3).
(2) The sure doom of the wicked (vers. 4–7).
(3) A snare falls upon him (vers. 8–11).
(4) Disease and death his portion (vers. 12–15).
(5) Root and branch dried up (vers. 16–19).
(6) The end of his day (vers. 20, 21).

(1) As usual in the later speeches, the address opens with a reproach, indicating the absence of the courtesy which marked the first address of Eliphaz. Bildad, who is quite moderate in the length of his speeches, accuses Job of multiplying words, and of being so full of talk that he will not listen to others. It is noteworthy that Bildad addresses Job as if others were associated with him: "How long will *ye* hunt for words?" as verse 2 has been rendered. This does not necessarily mean that others were directly associated with Job at that time and place, but he is looked upon as the representative of the whole class of those who would question the position of the friends. But, as we know, Job, at least in his opposition to their contention, was maintaining the truth: we may think of him as standing at the head of that great company of the righteous who have passed through deep suffering without any apparent reason. If Job had used strong language, there had been great provocation in the charges of the friends.

(2) Taking up his charges, Bildad reminds Job that all his lamentatious are unavailing: he is only tearing himself in vain rage—a most unkind description of the laments of the afflicted man. He goes on to tell him that all his cries will not change the fixed order of the earth; it will not become desolate for his sake, nor will the stable rock of retribution for evil be moved out of its place. The light of the wicked may burn brightly for a little while, as Job's had done, but it would be put out. The light of home, with its beckoning attraction, would vanish. His vigorous steps would begin to falter, and he would fall by his own evil counsel.

When we remember that by implication all this referred to Job, we can imagine how galling it was to his bruised spirit. It was painful enough to lose all he once had, and have the bright light quenched which once glowed in his hospitable tent; but to have this, and the inroads of the dread disease which was gnawing at his vitals and sapping his strength, cited as proof of his wickedness, was intolerable to human nature. It is as though he were saying, "Now we have found you out; you are reaping the fruit of your sin, and all this misery is a visitation from God for your wickedness."

(3) It is this retribution that Bildad enlarges upon, using imagery whose pungency would burn like salt upon raw flesh. He tells him that the wicked is driven into the net by his own feet, whose perverse ways carry him into those paths whose end is destruction. True, he was stating a solemn fact as to the wicked, but it remained to be proved

that Job was such. He declares that, all unknown to himself, the wicked walked over a snare which would take him when he least expected it: "The wicked is snared in the works of his hands." Repeating this with painful reiteration, Bildad assures Job of the certainty of the heel being caught in a trap, of a noose encircling him, as verse 9 has been rendered. The snare, skilfully covered in the earth, is ready for him; the net in his path is ready to enclose him as an unwary bird. No wonder that terrors affrighted him on every side, and fill him with dread at every step. Bildad selected words rich in poetic imagery, to force upon Job—what is untrue!

(4) But the captivity of the wicked will not satisfy the stern denouncer of evil; he must smite even unto death. So in this portion he traces the misery of the evil-doer until he falls into the jaws of death. His "calamity," as the word is rendered, preferably to "strength," is represented as a beast with hunger gnawing at it, ready to pounce upon him as he falls. Surely Job had felt this in the calamities which had come upon him. In the following verses there is even a closer description of the miseries of the afflicted patriarch. Calamity devoured the various parts of his skin, and "the first-born of death" (a solemn and poetic description of the bodily disease which devoured Job) devours his members, and leads him on to death, "the king of terrors." Strangers inhabit his tent, and brimstone — the final judgment of God — is showered upon his abode. It has been thought that in this last we have an allusion to "the fire

of God" which fell upon Job's property, and the destruction of his family. But at any rate, the general meaning of fierce judgment is apparent.

(5) Bildad next describes the overthrow of the evil man's family, or rather of himself and family. Changing the metaphor, as he had already done, from the snares of various kinds to the extinguishing of the light in a home, he now likens the evil man to a tree, whose root withers in the parched land of his affliction, and the branches are lopped off—as the cutting off of Job's children. All this is scripturally accurate. Does not the Psalmist say, "I have seen the wicked . . . spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not" (Ps. 37: 35, 36); and, "Cursed be the man . . . whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert" (Jer. 17: 5, 6). As repeatedly said, the fault lies in the application of such words to a man whose life gave the lie to their insistent charges of flagrant wickedness. Pursuing his theme, Bildad declares that name and remembrance shall fail the evil man—"the memory of the wicked shall rot"—he is driven off into darkness and none of his kin shall escape the disaster. Here is a sharp thrust at the bereaved parent, which must have made him wince with pain, though not in guilt.

(6) With this parting stab, Bildad closes his speech, reserving as a conclusion the declaration that all behold the fall of the wicked, both east and west (rather than "those who went before" and "come after") and be filled with dread. Thus are the wicked recompensed.

Job's Reply.

No matter how greatly pained he might be at the cruel language of Bildad, Job's reply does not indicate the slightest consciousness of guilt such as had been laid at his door. Indeed, as ever, he more than holds his own against the sharp lash of calumny, and with far more justice than his friends charges them with cruelty and malignity. He defies them to show any evil in him, and goaded on by their implacable theory (which had also been his own), boldly charges God with having wronged him. He is the object of divine cruelty and of human scorn. And yet it is wonderful to see the poor crushed spirit rise from the dust in those words of faith and hope, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." There is a most pathetic, though futile appeal to the friends for pity. But we must look at each part in more detail. The response in its six parts balances the address of Bildad.

(1) Reproach (chap. 19 : 1–6).
(2) God's hand (vers. 7–11).
(3) The scorn of man (vers. 12–20).
(4) The plea for pity (vers. 21–24).
(5) The triumph of faith (vers. 25–27).
(6) The close (vers. 28, 29).

(1) We must take Job's words as literally true: the speeches of Bildad and the others crushed him by their cruel severity. "Ten times"—a complete number—they had heaped reproaches upon him, and had amazed him by the unjust charges they had shamelessly made against him. What proof had they of sins in his past? If he had really

erred, the secret lay in his own bosom, where they had no right to intrude. They goad him on to declaring, as he had already done, that the wrong was not his but God's! It is this root of suspicion of the Almighty which must be searched out; but these men's false charges will never accomplish that.

(2) There follows now a fearful arraignment of God. Well is it for Job that he is accusing infinite patience, or he might have had a real taste of divine anger. But God bears with it all, waiting His own time to bring the poor distracted man into His own holy presence. Job cries out for judgment and help, but no answer is vouchsafed. God had hedged him about, as he had previously charged, and as Jeremiah in his lamentations had complained. *He* had brought him into darkness, had torn his honor from him, and dashed the crown of dignity from his head. Like an uprooted tree, he lay prostrate and helpless under the fierce wrath of God.

(3) Passing to man, Job sees the same injustice, which by implication is from God. It is *His* troops who beset him. His own brethren have forsaken him; kinsfolk have forgotten him. His very slaves look upon him as a stranger, and even to his own servant he is obliged to address words of persistent entreaty before he will be heard. Worst of all, the wife of his bosom recoils from the foul stench of his person. Boys mock him, friends abhor him. His bones cleave to his skin, and he has barely escaped death thus far, as by the skin of his teeth; that is, everything is eaten away except the slight

covering about their roots. It is a dreadful picture of a horrid disease, unutterably sad when we remember that he could not turn to God for comfort.

(4) The plea for pity and sympathy might well move hearts of adamant, but apparently Job's words fall on unheeding ears. It was their contention that God's hand had been upon him—for his sin. Job asks, will they persecute him as God was doing (awful charge!), and madly feed upon his flesh with unsatisfied desire? Such injustice renders him almost frantic. He longs that his words (charging them—and God) were written, indelibly engraved in the rock forever.

And then, in the midst of all these lamentations, he utters those magnificent words of faith: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." But this was the very God whom he was just now charging with injustice! How good it is to see Job's faith amid all this turmoil, turning to the very One whom he was maligning! Truly *these*—not his own protestations of innocence—are words worthy of being graven upon the enduring rock. This Redeemer, this Daysman, shall rise for him, though it be in the last days, after his death.

Here, then, we have a glimpse of the blessed Lord whom we know—not as One who shall arise, but who has already triumphed over death and the grave. He has vindicated us, not from the impugnment of an imagined righteousness, but from sins of deepest dye, and enabled us to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

(5) In the following words commentators have found varying meanings, according to their trans-

lation. We may resolve these into two: Does Job say, "*In* my flesh I shall see God," or "*From* (away from) my flesh I shall see God?" In other words, does he declare his belief in a spiritual disembodied condition after death, in which he will behold God and get his vindication? Or does he plainly state his conviction of the truth of a literal bodily resurrection? While the New Testament clearly teaches the spiritual consciousness of those who are out of the body—"To depart to be with Christ, which is far better"—yet it ever points forward to the resurrection of the body, in glory and incorruption. The words of David, prophesying the resurrection of our Lord, "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption," show that the resurrection of the body *was* foretold before the advent of our Lord upon earth.

Does not Job speak here of *beholding* the Lord with his own eyes, and does not this necessitate a resurrection? It does not seem that he was looking for the Redeemer to act for him in this present life, but after his death—in a glorified body. Thus, as has been beautifully said, "he plants the flag of victory upon his own grave."

We leave the statement of his faith therefore as we find it in our Authorized Version, a beautiful and clear confession of the truth of a risen, living Redeemer, who will also restore *his* poor corrupted body into a glorified one in which he will behold God face to face, and learn the secret of all his sorrows here. Surely a man with such faith must overcome in the end, for "This is the victory that overcometh . . . even our faith."

(6) He turns therefore to his friends and asks why they should persecute one in whom this living, indestructible root of faith is found. Rather, he tells them, they should ask themselves the reason for their implacable pursuit of him. His reply to Bildad, about the same length as the words that called it forth, he closes with a solemn warning lest *they* fall under the stroke which they vainly imagined was laying him low.

We may safely leave these addresses side by side to speak for themselves. In the light of all that has been before us, can we doubt that the moral advantage has been with Job?

3.—*Zophar's Second Address and Job's Reply.* (chaps. 20, 21.)

There is, as already noticed, an intensity in Zophar that gives a distinct character to his words. He fiercely denounces evil, leaving no room for doubt that he refers to Job, and depicts the certain doom of the wicked in language whose very vehemence soon exhausts what he has in mind. This seems to be the reason why he concludes all he has to say with this second address. The fiercer the fire, the more quickly it burns out. All that he says is true; his own unpardonable error is that he seeks to apply it to a righteous man. This address may be divided into seven parts; the last is but a concluding word.

(1) Brief triumph of the wicked (vers. 1–5).
(2) He is soon cut off (vers. 6–11).
(3) Poisoned with his own venom (vers. 12–16).

(4) Past prosperity unavailing (vers. 17–20).
(5) Retribution (vers. 21–25).
(6) Abiding wrath (vers. 26–28).
(7) Conclusion (ver. 29).

(1) Zophar springs to the reply, as a young man would, feeling that he had abundant thoughts to meet all Job's statements, and convict him of the wickedness they charged upon him. He is not the first man who has mistaken vehemence for argument, and whose haste to express his feelings is an indication of poverty of thought rather than the weight of truth. He seems prepared for reproach, which Job's past answers lead him to expect, but is impelled by his knowledge to make one more attempt to silence Job. As a matter of fact, wounded pride may be the real reason for his eagerness to speak.

He now lays down the fact upon which he rests all he has to say. It is a well-known truth, he declares, known from the time man has been upon the earth: "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite (or evil-doer) is but for a moment." There is both truth and error in this statement. Cain was not cut off immediately after the murder of his brother. On the contrary, his life was spared by God, and he settled down in the world with a city and a numerous progeny. Similarly, the men before the flood prolonged their days in the enjoyment of their pleasures, possessions and inventions. It is so to this day. How often does the wicked seem to prosper, even to old age.

On the other hand, sin naturally tends to shorten

life. "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Excesses bring their own consequences, and violence often brings down the arm of human vengeance upon its head. Besides this, God makes examples of evil men, especially those professedly under His government. Korah, Dathan and Abiram are an instance of this in the Old Testament, and Ananias and Sapphira in the New.

But this is not the universal, nor even the ordinary rule. Many evil men go on for years in outward prosperity, and pass, with little apparent change, to their account in another world. There is no intimation that the "rich man" in Luke 16 was cut off early because of his sins. God varies His dealings with men, that in every possible way they may be left without excuse: swift judgment, prolonged patience, chastening and prosperity have all been tried, if men may by any means be led to repentance. The apostle sums it up thus: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5: 24). Our Lord rebukes the tendency to regard sudden death as a mark of special sin (Luke 13: 1–5).

We would therefore conclude that Zophar was putting a part for the whole, and to that degree his statement was faulty. Job indeed in his reply calls attention to this. So anxious, however, are the "friends" to make good their case, that they do not scruple at extreme and unfair statements, which become positively evil when applied to the grief of a man not proved guilty. We shall find that this tendency culminates in the last speech of Eli-

phaz in direct and specific charges of evil without the slightest foundation.

(2) Zophar proceeds with his picture—poetic but dreadfully stern; solemnly beautiful, if we can forget his purpose. The course of the sinner is further dwelt upon, and his end contrasted with his ambitions. His hopes may have risen to the heavens, his head to the clouds, in imagination, but he is consumed away like fuel stored up for the winter. The well-known custom in the East of preparing the dung of cattle for this purpose, explains the figure here used. Men will miss him, and ask in vain, Where is he? As a passing dream of the night he is gone; the eyes that once looked on him behold him no more. His ill-gotten gains are given, reluctantly enough, we may well believe, by his children to the poor. His bones, once full of youthful vigor (as suggested in the revised translation), are now laid low in their parent dust. The section begins with heaven and ends with the grave! Such is the downward path of those who know not God.

(3) Nor is the reason for this dreadful conclusion of the life of the wicked far to seek. He has but himself to blame, and is reaping what he sowed. The poison comes from his own vitals. In a few strokes the speaker draws a dreadful picture of the sinful man, who, gorging himself with sinful pleasures, hidden and cherished beneath his tongue, is like the venomous serpent, preparing the deadly virus which shall bring death to him. His riches, evilly acquired, will be torture to his closing days. Truly, all this is solemnly true. God

is not arbitrary in the punishment of the wicked; they treasure up "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The "good things" received by the rich man, instead of leading him to gratitude and faith, were used for his own gratification—away from God—and thus did but return to torture him with remorse. "Son, remember," shows where the thoughts must turn when there is no further opportunity to hide from the consequences of his own acts. As has been pointed out, the name "Gehenna" is from a root, "to be freely given"—"gratuitous," it might be rendered. How wickedly vain is the talk about God being "too merciful to send men to hell:"—men show no mercy to themselves; they have only *themselves* to blame for their doom. All this is accentuated by the fact that infinite love has provided a "gratuitous" remedy, which is rejected by so many.

(4) Zophar next glances at the former prosperity of the wicked, when he quaffed the draught of pleasure as from an overflowing river of honey and cream. What was grasped from others, must now be given up, and his riches can bring him no joy. Like Ahab, who came down to see the vineyard acquired by the murder of Naboth, and had to hear his own doom pronounced by the prophet, he can get no joy from his possession. The unfinished house he took remains as a monument of his crime; he cannot even take his most cherished belongings with him.

Zophar is indeed an expert in describing evil and its results. It will be noted that the wickedness

described is largely violations of the second part of the law, particularly in regard to dishonesty and violence. Much that he hints at here is directly charged by Eliphaz against Job. The friends thus strengthen one another in their determination to establish their theory that Job is the wicked hypocrite they depict, suffering for his own misdeeds.

(5) The thought of retribution is enlarged upon in this portion. Covetousness means an ultimate ruin; the very ones he oppressed (the "needy," rather than the "wicked," ver. 22) shall be arrayed against him. And, above all, *God* shall pour forth the fury of His wrath upon him, like the fiery rain that fell upon Sodom. Seeking to flee from the weapon of iron, he is pierced by the more deadly arrow; "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; . . . and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (Amos 5: 19). With unerring precision the shaft pierces the vitals of the terror-stricken man, and there is no escape.

(6) This doom is final, with no gleam of hope beyond. The sinner has laid up a treasure of "wrath against the day of wrath;" and unquenchable fire, which needs no "blowing upon" to add to its fierceness, consumes him, and those he leaves behind taste the same fire. The heavens are against him; their holy light only reveals his iniquity. Job had appealed to heaven and earth to witness to his righteousness (chap. 16: 18, 19), but Zophar hints the absolute reverse—the heavens do but declare his sin, and earth rises up in the judgment against him. He concludes his fearful picture with the mention of divinely appointed wrath.

(7) "This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God" (ver. 29). Zophar has completed his terrible charges. He has pursued without pity a bruised and apparently dying man. He has refused the appeal of Job for pity, has ignored the declaration of his unshaken integrity, and has pressed his suspicion with an iron hand into the soul of the poor sufferer, and all this under the specious plea of piety pleading for God! However it may end, we feel that no help is to be got from Zophar and those like him, and we do not regret that we shall hear him no more until he comes in a very different spirit to ask the prayers of the friend whom he has maligned.

Job's Reply.

While our sympathy goes out to Job for the treatment he is receiving at the hands of his friends, there is abundant evidence in his replies that he is quite able to answer for himself, so far at least as men are concerned. He meets each of the speakers on his own ground and silences him. In this reply to Zophar he shows that his spirit is still unbroken, and answers with conclusiveness the semblance of arguments which he had presented. Job's reply, following the form of Zophar's address, may be divided into seven portions :

(1) The solemnity of his reply, which has to do with God (chap. 21: 1–6).

(2) The prosperity of the wicked (vers. 7–16).

(3) Judgment seen only in their children (vers. 17–21).

(4) Varied experiences of the wicked (vers. 22–26).

(5) He charges the friends (vers. 27–31).

(6) The end in death (vers. 32, 33).

(7) Conclusion (ver. 34).

(1) He begins with a plea that at least they will listen to him. This will at least take the place of the consolation which they refuse to give him. After that they can resume their taunts. For himself, he says he has ceased to expect any right judgment from man; and well he might if that were all his hope. This implies that he has turned to God, which is in itself an indication of the faith at the bottom of his heart. But his difficulties have not vanished; they may well be astonished, for he himself trembles to speak of what he is now going to lay before them, and it disproves much that which Zophar had just so eloquently set forth. It will be noted, here, that the tone of querulousness is absent from this dignified opening of Job. He propounds his difficulty to his friends, and if they are men they must see his point.

(2) He looks at the other side, at the case of the prosperous wicked, and with ability equal to Zophar's, reminds him that evil men often *go on* unchecked. They live to old age and become mighty in power. Their families grow up about them, and all abides in quietness without the rod of God falling upon them. Flocks and herds increase; his children —in sad contrast to the now childless speaker— are like a group of lambs skipping about the home, and in it is heard the sound of timbrel and harp and pipe. All their days are in prosperity until the

end comes, although these very men said to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Like Pharaoh, they ask, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?" While describing their profane defiance of God, which goes so long unrebuked, Job is careful to express his abhorrence of such impiety: "Lo, their good is not by their own hand" (all that they have is from God); "the counsel of the wicked is far from me" (ver. 16). All this is true, and bears out the teaching of psalm 73, where one is under exercise similar to his own.

(3) In this part Job fully admits that there will be a final manifestation of the sin of the wicked, but it is so often seen in the children instead of themselves; and what do they care for their house after them? (ver. 21). In opposition to Zophar, he reminds him "how *rarely* is the candle of the wicked put out," as ver. 17 has been rendered; how seldom does calamity break in upon them, as the scatterings of "snares" or "lightnings" in the wrath of God. While it is true, as the psalmist tells us, that the ungodly are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1 : 4), Job reminds his hearers that this seldom takes place in the present life; it is reserved for the "judgment." The two following verses, 19, 20, state the facts (which are put in the form of a desire in another rendering), that God layeth up the iniquity of the wicked for the children, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." He shall eventually see the result of his evil, though the day is long deferred.

(4) In fact, as Job goes on to show, the experiences of the wicked are varied, and he adds, Who shall sit in judgment upon God for these varied dealings? One dies quietly in the midst of abounding prosperity, as the psalm says, "The wicked have no bands in their death;" another is cut off in wretchedness. Both alike reach a common end in the grave. And this being the case, how ill it becomes his friends to state, as an unvarying rule, that judgment in this life was always a sign of sin, and prosperity of righteousness, in the persons affected. Although he himself had reached no solution to his problem, he could at least urge his friends to "judge nothing before the time."

(5) He now declares their purpose, which they have only hinted at hitherto, that Job was an instance of the soundness of their contention; and see, say they, what has become of him! He throws back their insinuations by the bold question, Have they not learned from observers everywhere that the wicked is "spared" in the day of calamity (not "reserved," as in our version), "to the day of destruction"? And so powerful is he that none dare charge his sin to him, or inflict deserved punishment—all this, alas, only too common in our own day.

(6) It is in death alone that the end of the prosperity of many of the ungodly is reached; even in his burial, outward pomp and display accompany him as far as possible—buried with all the honor that wealth can buy, and the watchman guarding the tomb where his body is laid away. In this sense the very clods of his grave seem to pander

to his pride; his gorgeous mausoleum still declaring what a great man he was.

(7) Thus Job concludes a very complete answer to all the magniloquence of his friends. Their "comforts," indeed, are vain, and their replies are lacking in the sincerity that indicates the real seeker after truth.

We have reached the end of the second series in the controversy. As already stated, there are gleams of Job's faith in it, though still clouded with dark questionings of God. On the other hand, his friends have evidently reached the limit of their ability to force a conclusion, although they will make one more effort. On the whole, we may say that distinct progress has been made, and the advantage is with Job. As yet, however, the *enigma* remains, "Why does God afflict the righteous?" and Job has yet to learn the reply, not from men, but from God Himself.

Section 3.—The third addresses of the friends—conclusion of their argument. Job answers them all, and remains unmoved by them, but still in darkness and self-satisfaction (chaps. 22–26).

With the present series we reach the conclusion of the controversy so far as the friends were concerned. Beyond a wearisome reiteration of their former arguments, if such they can be called, there is nothing of importance advanced by them. Eliphaz, indeed, who opens this third section of the controversy, continues to maintain his original contention, and speaks with dignity and much poetic beauty, with some slight return to gracious-

ness. But the address is marred by a painful spirit of gross unfairness. Bildad, the second speaker, closes feebly and briefly. Zophar remains silent. This, their last attempt, is fragmentary therefore, and may without injustice be considered a failure.

On the other hand, Job waxes stronger and stronger. He replies with vigor and a good deal of conclusiveness to the remarks of his friends, and in a way which effectually closes their mouths. But his own mouth remains open to pour forth the misery of his unrelieved heart; and the dark cloud still hangs between himself and God. All this will appear as we take up each address and its reply. These fall into two parts—Zophar, as we have said, taking no part.

1. Eliphaz: False charges against Job; the promise of restoration if he is penitent. Job's reply (chaps. 22–24).

2. Bildad: Renewed statement of God's greatness and man's sinfulness. Job's reply (chaps. 25, 26).

1. *Eliphaz's Address.*

This may be divided into seven parts, a complete summing up from his point of view of the entire argument:

(1) Job's sin in view of God's greatness (chap. 22 : 1–5).

(2) The direct charge (vers. 6–11).

(3) All is known to God (vers. 12–14).

(4) The way of the wicked (vers. 15–18).

(5) Their just punishment (vers. 19, 20).
(6) Final call to repentance (vers. 21–25).
(7) Prophecy of a bright future (vers. 26–30).

(1) In this first portion Eliphaz dwells upon God's infinite greatness and sufficiency unto Himself. Is man profitable to God? Does he add anything to the infinite fulness of the Creator? A wise man is profitable to himself, but in no sense is God dependent upon him. His righteousness is of no special *profit* to God (not "pleasure," for surely He does take pleasure in His saints). As the self-emptied One declares, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee" (Ps. 16 : 2). If therefore Job refuses to repent of his sin, he is not injuring God, but himself, and must reap the consequences. Eliphaz asks Job, does not his chastisement prove his sin? For would God rebuke a man for piety—his godly fear? Therefore Job's sin is proven! Surely an easy way, in a world of suffering, to prove man a sinner. But it proves too much, for it includes every sufferer — the righteous as well as the wicked.

We must, however, take exception to the first part of this declaration, as well as to the manifestly mistaken character of the second part. Has not God suffered, not in His blessed nature, but in what should have displayed it — righteousness in His creature? All has been created for His glory and pleasure. God *is* therefore a loser by the failure of man to exhibit in his life that which manifests the wisdom and goodness of his Creator. Judgment is not vindictive, therefore, but retributive, and wrath is for actual sin against God. Such

is the conviction of sin brought home to the conscience by the Spirit of God: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." We get but a cold view of God as Eliphaz describes Him. On the contrary, the word of God presents Him as deeply concerned in all our affairs, as intimately associated with His creation. There would be no room for the gospel in the partial statements of Eliphaz. God is not simply holding the balances of justice as a disinterested observer, to mete out punishment to the one who comes short. If such teaching obtained, where would we find find place for, "Like as a Father pitieth His children;" "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;" "He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness?"

(2) Having laid down his erroneous principle with such positiveness, and having declared that Job's sin was infinitely great (for God does not punish a pious man) Eliphaz opens up a most startling series of statements as to Job's actual conduct. It is no longer *implied* sin in the call to repentance, or inuendoes in likening Job's suffering to those of the wicked, but as outrageous accusations of actual sin as could be imagined. Job has taken away his brother's goods on a false claim! He has stripped the poor of his last covering! He has refused water to the languishing and bread to the starving! By sheer power he has taken the lands of others and dwelt there himself as a great and honorable man! Widows and orphans have been driven away by this heartless monster! Proofs? Witnesses? What need of these, when the *theory* proves all so satisfactorily without going to the trouble of establish-

ing facts! Thus, out of his "inner consciousness," does the grave and gray-haired Eliphaz evolve conclusive proof that the suffering friend and patriarch before him is a monster of iniquity! From such friendship and perversions of truth, may God deliver us.

But even now, is not suspicion of others all too common? One is not successful in business, has illness in his family, loses loved ones, and the hasty conclusion is that he is being chastened for some imaginary faults. How cruel this is, and contrary to the plain direction, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Let us be slow to suspect, and slower to charge unknown evil, leaving that to the Searcher of hearts. If He calls upon us to declare evil, it is of what He has unmistakably manifested.

Concluding his charge, Eliphaz declares these sins explain why Job is caught as in a snare, and overwhelmed with fear. Can he not see the darkness which envelops him, and the flood of waters in which he is engulfed?

(3) This portion continues the unfair suspicions of Eliphaz. He makes Job say that God dwells in heaven, and has His abode among the stars, therefore how can He see what is taking place beneath the clouds which hide the earth from His view? He walks about in the vault of heaven in satisfied ignorance of everything that goes on in the world below! Has Eliphaz forgotten Job's strong declaration of the omnipotence and omniscience of God in chapter 9? The title of this section is rightly given however as "All is known to God," for Job's

imagined unbelief is intended to bring out into all the bolder relief the great truth that nothing can be hid from the Searcher of hearts.

(4) Recurring to the oft-repeated example of the wicked and their punishment, Eliphaz depicts their temporal prosperity and the inevitable judgment which overtakes them. Like the grass which groweth up only to be cut down and withered, they perished before their time. Their apparently solid foundations were swept away by a flood (or, perhaps more accurately, turned into a flood). The meaning is the same in either case, and there may be a reference to the days of Noah, when they ate and drank, married, and were given in marriage, "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." As samples of the ungodly at all times, these men before the flood had defied the God who had bestowed His blessings upon them: "Depart from us!" and what can the Almighty do to them? From such impiety Eliphaz—we may believe with all sincerity—turns in horror; "The counsel of the wicked be far from me." He is quoting the very words of Job (chap. 21: 16)—why will he not allow to his former friend the same abhorrence of evil as himself? Instead of this, it would almost seem that he is expressing his repulsion from Job, associating *him* with those who defy God.

(5) This godlessness can receive but its merited punishment, at which all the righteous shall rejoice. "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there

is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Ps. 58 : 10, 11). There is, however, this difference between the position of Eliphaz and that taken in many of the psalms: these give us the final cleansing of the kingdom "of all things that offend and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13 : 41), after full space has been given for repentance, and when evil shall have been manifested as incurable rebellion against God, as the absolute barrier to all full blessing upon the earth. Therefore the righteous rejoice at the *deliverance* rather than the mere judgment, although all will be seen as perfectly in accord with the full character of God. So, too, there is joy in heaven when Satan is cast out (Rev. 12 : 10–12), and when Babylon receives her long-deferred judgment (Rev. 18 : 20 ; 19 : 1–3).

But we can see how unfair Eliphaz's judgment is, in view of the admittedly various life and end of wicked men, and especially in view of the suffering of many of the righteous. It is particularly painful, as it seems to be spoken with a relish by Eliphaz, in reference to Job's state, which is all too apparent.

(6) But the oldest of the friends is going to bring his remarks to a decorous end. He will once more hold out the offer of restoration to the offender—if he will but repent. The language is of great beauty, and we might well wish it had been used in a worthier way. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace : thereby good shall come unto thee." This might well serve as a gospel text; for is it not eternal life to know the only true God and

Jesus Christ whom He hath sent? And what peace is found through this knowledge—"peace by the blood of the Cross"—peace preached and peace possessed by faith! What good, for time and eternity, flows from this acquaintance! But he is addressing one who *does* know God—that is, according to the Old Testament revelation—and therefore the apparent tenderness of the exhortation is turned to gall. "Receive, I pray thee, the law (instruction) from His mouth, and lay up His words in thy heart." The comfort to God's people, "We glory in tribulations also," or the "weeping with them that weep," is not found in Eliphaz's words: "If thou return to the Almighty thou shalt be built up, if thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles."

Again, we must warn God's people of the snare into which Eliphaz has fallen. All pious exhortations to repent, to give up sin, to judge a course of evil, if not based upon *known facts*, are but insults, and savor of a pharisaic spirit, which, as with Eliphaz and his friends, must itself be repented of.

Eliphaz holds out, in an almost prophetic way, the prospect of a restoration of all Job's former prosperity—wealth and happiness. Verses 24 and 25 have been rendered in different ways. The Authorized Version begins the promises with the close of verse 23, "thou shalt put away iniquity," etc., "Then thou shalt lay up gold as dust," etc. The ordinarily excellent version of Delitzsch makes all conditional up to the close of verse 24: "If thou lay by *in the dust* the gold ore, and under the pebbles of the brooks the gold of Ophir, so shall

the Almighty be to thee gold ore in abundance, and silver to thee of the brightest lustre."

The usual rendering, however, seems to be preferred. Old Testament usage, and particularly that of the book of Job, associates the enjoyment of temporal wealth with the favor of God. Thus Eliphaz promises restoration of all the wealth that Job had lost. Then, too, it would seem nothing short of satire to exhort a man who had been already deprived of his wealth, to lay it aside in the dust, or as worthless stones of the brook. It has been therefore contended that Eliphaz is speaking figuratively, and that Job is told to lay aside the covetous love of gold in the dust. We leave therefore the rendering of our excellent version largely as it is. The Almighty will be a high place of defence for the penitent, and abundance of wealth will be his.

(7) Eliphaz now reaches his peroration, picturing the joys that await Job if he will only—? *acknowledge that his false accusers are right!* Then he will enjoy communion with the Almighty, basking in the sunlight of His countenance. Prayer will receive its answer, and the vows he has made in his affliction will be accepted. He shall make plans which will not be frustrated, and the light will fall upon all his paths. If these paths should seem to take a downward course (ver. 29) Job will need but to say, "Arise," or "a lifting up," and all will be well. For he will be one of the humble whom God exalteth. Yea, Job shall be a succorer of others, the once guilty (not, "island of the innocent") will be rescued by him whose hands have become clean.

Thus the friend closes. He has sought to make out his case, and to mingle promises with denunciations. Sometimes it would seem that he was foretelling the recovery of Job, but all is marred by his wrong principle, and is therefore in itself valueless. And yet there are many noble and beautiful utterances here. How important it is therefore to have the true point of view, that the opening of our mouth may be right things.

Job's Reply to Eliphaz (chaps. 23, 24).

Job does not trouble himself to reply to the grievous charges of Eliphaz; the time for that has passed, and he has so repeatedly declared his righteousness that there is little need to reiterate it here. He will, before he is fully done, go completely into his self-vindication (chap. 31). Here his concern is with God. The cloud has again fallen and obscured Him from the view of faith which had shone out brightly a little while before. This sad eclipse leads Job to utter hard things against the Lord; but we can see it is from having lost sight of God, not the malice of one who turns against Him. But until God has probed into the recesses of Job's self-righteousness we may expect a recurrence of these clouds of unbelief.

When he comes to take up the argument of Eliphaz regarding the wicked, Job has the better of the contention, as will appear when we reach that part of his reply (chap. 24). The position of the friends is untenable, and while Job offers no true solution to the problem, he closes their mouths.

The reply may be divided, as many of the others, into seven parts:

(1) His longing to lay his case before God (chap. 23: 1–9).
(2) Protestations of righteousness (vers. 10–12).
(3) Afraid of God as his enemy (vers. 13–17).
(4) God's apparent failure in government (chap. 24: 1–12).
(5) The wicked described (vers. 13–17).
(6) Their escape into Sheol (vers. 18–21).
(7) God seemingly their protector (vers. 22–25).

(1) "Even to-day" (after so much discussion and accusation by the friends) "my complaint still biddeth defiance"—so it has been rendered, rather than, "is bitter." It is the bitterness of resistance against their charges, rather than the bitterness of grief. He brings forth his groaning in protest against the unfairness of his treatment. This rendering seems in accord with the thought of protest on Job's part. It is not, "My stroke is heavier than my groaning," as in our version,—he is not complaining of the bitterness of his suffering, but of its injustice. Ah, did he but know it, Job's acknowledgment would have been, "He hath not dealt with me after my sins." If we got our *deserts*, where would we be!

With this sense of outrage, Job desires to go before God and lay charges against Him! He would come boldly into His presence, in His very abode, and lay his case before Him, with his mouth full of arguments. He even challenges any reply from God, "I would know the words which He would

answer me." So can a righteous man speak when at a distance from God. How different it was when he had his desire and God appeared to him!

And just here, when his almost insane defiance of God is at its height, there bursts forth a glance of that confidence in God which we have already had occasion to note. "Will He plead against me with His great power! No! but He would put strength in me," or "regard me with compassion." These are surely not the words of an unbeliever. He doubts God's ways, accuses Him, but is confident that if he could only see Him all would be cleared. God would consider his "weak and wandering cries," and vindicate him from divine injustice! But what an anomaly—the righteous man disputing with Him, and delivered by the Judge Himself from His unjust severity! Strange contradiction it all is; yet better far thus to long to go before God, than the pride which would say to Him, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." It is always better to bring even our doubts of God to *Himself*, if we have nothing else to bring.

But where can God be found? Job rushes forward, but He is not there; backward, but he cannot perceive Him. Turn to the right or the left, God still escapes him. He is left alone

> "Upon the great world's altar stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God"—

But God is not there! He can only

> "Grope, and gather dust and chaff,
> And cry to what I feel is Lord of all."

It is all most tragic; and if it were only Job seeking God, he might well sink in despair. But, all unknown to himself, God is seeking *Job*, and will find him too, ere long.

(2) Not finding God, Job turns in self-occupation to himself, and renews his protestation of righteousness. God knows his way, "the way of the righteous" (Ps. 1: 6), and after due trial, he will come forth as gold. It is all true, and yet the evident self-righteousness in it vitiates the nobility of the words. It is not, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth." We feel the real trial has not yet come. It is his personal uprightness that is maintained—not the sense of grace; he thinks it comes from his own heart. *He* has kept God's commands, has held fast to the words of His mouth more than to his "necessary food." Job has valued God's will more than his own.

(3) But how true it is that if we commend *ourselves* we condemn God. Thus Job adds that God is determined to punish him, and nothing can swerve Him from this purpose! Good it is for Job and ourselves that we have One with whom is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He has said, "I am the Lord, I change not; *therefore* ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Job thought that the thing appointed for him was but the misery and suffering through which he was passing, while it was rather the "needs be" which was to work patience. Job did not see the appointed "*end* of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy"—the end of a love too great to be swerved

from His purposes of blessing by our complaint and unbelief. Yes, "many such like things are with Him:" the path for each of His children is different, but the end is the same.

The "patience of Job" is not apparent here. On the contrary, fears fill his heart. He dreads God as an enemy, and would shrink from the very presence which so lately he craved. He blames God with thus overwhelming him, and throwing his thoughts into utter confusion.

The closing verse of this section is somewhat obscure. In our Authorized Version, Job wishes he had been cut off before this darkness came upon him, that he might not have seen it. Another view, following more closely the context, makes him emphasize the dread of God; he does not shrink from his calamities, terrible as they are, but from this dread Being who fills his soul with dread. "I have not been destroyed before the darkness [of present affliction], and before my countenance [all disfigured with disease], which thick darkness covereth." Blessed be God, His perfect love in Christ has been revealed; all is bright *there*, and the darkness is but a passing cloud which cannot hide the glory of the love that shines down upon us.

(4) "Wherefore are not bounds reserved by the Almighty, and they who honor Him see not His days?" (ch. 24: 1). Such is the rendering of a very competent scholar, which gives a clearer meaning than the somewhat obscure translation of our Version, although the meaning in both cases is similar. Job is about to dwell upon the apparent failure of God to judge the wicked, and

begins by asking why God does not allow His saints to see a righteous judgment visited upon them. Why does He not set a limit to their impiety and wicked oppression? Job enumerates some details of their evil course, which violate every principle of right: landmarks are removed; they steal their neighbor's flocks, and shepherd them as their own; the fatherless and widow are victims of their rapacity; they drive away the poor and the needy.

Then, in thought, Job follows these poor sufferers driven from their houses by the wicked, and describes their wretched struggle for existence in the nomad state into which they have been thrust (vers. 5–8). In a few bold strokes, of one familiar with the scene, Job depicts these poor starving sufferers, driven out like beasts, to gather a bare subsistence for their children as best they may. They seek employment even from their oppressors, and reap their fields and glean in their vineyards. Scarcely covered with rags, they shiver in the cold and rain as they seek for shelter in the rocks. "The tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel," and the oppression of the poor and needy has cried to God throughout all man's history; yet God heareth not!

Job takes other cases to illustrate the same heartlessness. The wicked tear the fatherless from the breast; they defraud the poor. Why do his friends insinuate that *he* was guilty of such conduct, when glaring cases were manifest to them? The poor are robbed of their very garments; they toil hungering among the sheaves; at the oil press, and in the vintage they are repressed from partaking;

there is groaning of the oppressed in the city—and God takes no heed to it! It is an awful picture of facts only too well-known to them—and to us. How can Eliphaz make such facts fit in with his theory that evil is always punished in this life? But, oh, how can *God* close His eyes to these things, and afflict a faithful man instead of these wrong doers? This is Job's great trouble, and for this he has found no solution.

(5) There is a morbid fascination about such themes as now occupied Job's mind, and he continues his description of the unrestrained course of the wicked. Here are men who hate the light, "because their deeds are evil." They choose the night for their "unfruitful works of darkness." The murderer lies in wait for the workman going at dawn to his labor, and turns to steal in the night. The adulterer lurks about for his abominations "in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and, dark night" (Prov. 7: 9)—like other beasts of prey. "By day they shut themselves up" (ver. 16), and, how solemn, "they know not the light"—it manifests their shame and sin. "The morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them they are in the terrors of the shadow of death" (ver. 17). This has been rendered, "The depth of night is to them even as the dawn of the morning"—they are at home in the night—it is their day.

(6) And how does this course of wickedness end? Does God come in and make an example of them? Not always; on the contrary they pass away like a swiftly flowing stream, leaving their heritage to

receive the curse of men instead of getting the just vengeance themselves?—"the gallows is cheated," and the evil doers have departed from their vineyards where they might have been dealt with as they deserved. As drought and heat dry up snow-waters, so Sheol causes the wicked to pass suddenly from view. They pass away, forgotten even by their mother, to be the food of worms! Such is the end of the wicked oppressor. The general thought of this part of Job's reply is that in this life, and often up to the very end, men escape the penalties they deserve. He does not lift the curtain behind which the awful future is disclosed; his purpose is to reply to the contentions of his friends, and he answers them effectually.

(7) Job concludes with another feature of this awful anomaly. God seems to be on the side of the ungodly, preserving them by His almighty power when they might have been smitten down: "He preserveth the mighty by His strength; such an one rises again, though he despaired of life" (ver. 22). How often have we seen the ungodly brought low in sickness and then raised up almost from the grave. *We* know it is the goodness of God that would lead them to repentance, but in Job's disordered view it seemed to be an indication of favor from God. They live on in security, and God's eye seems to rest favorably upon them. This seems more in accord with Job's argument than the implication that, though God apparently sustains them, His eye is on their ways, and that He will judge them. Job dwells rather upon the *absence* of any special judgment. They are exalted in their

life, and when the inevitable hour of death comes —appointed for all— they are no more; they are sunken away (in the grave), snatched away like all others. They are cut down like the ears of the ripe corn (ver. 24).

Job closes with a demand for an answer. Who can charge him with misrepresenting the truth, or rob his speech of its force as a reply to the arguments of the friends?

It is a solemn conclusion. Not that Job has misstated facts: indeed, these are incontrovertible; but his deductions are dreadful. He follows his logic to the very brink of the precipice—that God deals unfairly. If so, He is not God. What a triumph would such a conclusion be to the malicious enemy who had instigated all this, and declared that if his prosperity were withdrawn, Job would "curse Thee to thy face." Job has not done so, and Satan is defeated; but so far as the natural reasoning of Job goes, he might have done as Satan predicted and his wife advised. All unknown to himself, grace had wrought, for he was a child of God: he was not permitted to go where his unbelieving thoughts led him. What a triumph too for the friends would such a conclusion be. They could have said, "We have stood for God, while Job has assailed His character." But neither side has convinced the other. While the advantage remains with Job, the disappointing character of his closing words makes necessary what we find in the last part of the book. But we have still to hear him pour forth all his heart, before God can be heard.

2.—*The Third Address of Bildad—Job's Reply* (chaps. 25, 26.)

Bildad, in this third address, is the last of the friends to speak. Zophar remains silent, having poured out all his impetuous heart in his former addresses.

Judging from the brevity of Bildad's address, and the fact that it contains practically nothing new, it would seem that the friends have exhausted all the arguments that their position permitted them to advance. And this is saying a great deal, for they were men of sober thoughtfulness, with abilities for expression rarely excelled. Their language is noble and elevated, their metaphors of rare beauty and force, but their position and contention were wrong, narrow, and untenable. Hence the brevity of these closing words.

Yet we cannot speak contemptuously of these few sentences, for they state the two great basic facts which stand out in their clearness at the close of the book. They may almost be said to be prophetic of "the end of the Lord," which Job himself will acknowledge at the last. But Bildad is scarcely conscious of the force of what he says, for he links it with his theory, and thus tries to prove that Job is the evil man they have all along maintained he was. But his words were as true for himself and the other friends as for Job. The address may be divided into two parts, which give prominence to the two great facts which will yet stand out.

(1) God's greatness (vers. 1–3).

(2) Man's nothingness (vers. 4–6).

(1) "Dominion and fear are with Him." Who can declare the infinite greatness of God, who fills heaven and earth, and transcends all His limitless creation? "The heavens, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." Nor is this infinitude of being powerless; He reigns over all things, the government is His—

> "He everywhere hath sway,
> And all things serve His might."

Well may we pause and meditate with reverent awe upon the majesty and power of God. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? . . . It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth . . . that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in . . . Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: He calleth them all by names; by the greatness of His might, and strength of His power, not one faileth" (Isa. 40 : 12, 22, 26).

> "Great God, how infinite Thou art!
> What helpless worms are we!"

Who would not fear such an infinite Being? And yet what an awful proof of man's apostate, fallen condition we have in the well-nigh universal lack of the fear of God. He before whom the seraphim veil their faces, is ignored and blasphemed by puny sinners!

"He maketh peace in His high places." Those heavenly orbs display not only His power, by their immensity, but His wisdom and skill in the harmony with which they pursue their appointed courses, held fast in their orbits of unthinkable greatness by Him who created them. "Not one faileth." There is no discord, no clash—all makes melody as they declare His glory,

> "Forever singing as they shine,
> The Hand that made us is divine."

Similarly the angelic hosts, who are associated with these "morning stars," are kept in peace, with one purpose, to "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." There is no strife or discord among those exalted beings: all is maintained in peace. Or if we think of the discord which did intrude when Satan fell from his high place, and when the angels kept not their first estate, God was not thwarted, His throne was not shaken. The rebellious angels were "delivered into chains of darkness;" and if Satan was allowed freedom for a time, we see that it is only for a limited period; the time is coming when he will be cast out of heaven, bound and cast into the abyss, and eventually, with all who follow him, be eternally confined in "the lake of fire." Peace will be maintained in the high places.

Among the asteroids there seems to be evidence of a collision among some of the planets, but all has become quiet, and each body has found its right place—all is at peace. One day the heavens about us will pass away with a great noise. But

"we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Thus at the last all creation will vindicate the statement of Bildad, "He maketh peace in His high places."

"Who can number His armies?" At one word our Lord could have received "more than twelve legions of angels." "The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The "innumerable company of angels . . the general assembly." What are the armies of men compared with these? The prophet prayed that his servant's eyes might be opened to see the mountain "full of horses and chariots of fire" (2 Ki. 6: 17).

"God is light," and His hosts are hosts of light; they shine in a glory not their own: "Whom doth not *His* light surpass?" Let any of these sons of the morning vaunt themselves, and their brightness would become dim. "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezek. 28: 17). Of God it must ever be said, "Who dwelleth in light unapproachable." His light surpasses that of all His creatures, be they never so exalted. It rises above and exceeds infinitely the light of the brightest of them all. This gives a meaning more in accord with the context than that of our version —"Upon whom doth not His light arise?"

(2) Having in a few grand strokes depicted the greatness of God, Bildad turns to the littleness of man. "How then can (mortal, frail) man be justified with God?" How can one whose very mortality is a witness of his sinfulness stand before the

Almighty? How can one born of woman, with a nature inherited from the disobedient one, be clean in God's sight? Is it not true that all right apprehension of the greatness and majesty of God begets a sense of sin and uncleanness? It was so with Job and with these friends at the last.

Behold the moon; its light is dim in His holy presence. The sparkling stars are not clean in His sight. How much less is sinful man—a worm of the dust! Bildad selects the heavens at night rather than the sun by day for this noble comparison. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8: 3, 4). While not so intense, the light of moon and stars is more brilliant by contrast with the surrounding darkness; and this is especially the case with the eastern skies over the dry lands bordering the deserts. The moon and stars speak of God in a special way,and by contrast bring home to man his nothingness. We have, thank God, the divine answer to the question, "What is man?" We see Jesus, who was crucified, crowned with glory and honor.

Thus, while apparently repeating the words of Eliphaz (chaps. 4: 18; 15: 15, 16), Bildad's close is far beyond his thoughts and suspicions. We will rest in what he *says*, rather than in what he *thinks* of his poor, suffering friend. We will not charge him with weakness or imitation, but subdue our own spirits under the quiet light of those heavens which witness to our nothingness, and turn us to Him who is our "Strength and our Redeemer."

Job's Reply (chap. 26).

Viewed from the personal standpoint, Job's reply is adequate and conclusive. He declares that Bildad's words, in the present circumstances, are utterly beside the mark. They do not touch Job's case. He then continues in the lines of his friend's words, and mounts even higher than he had, taking also a deeper and wider view of the greatness of God. It is all most admirable from a literary point of view—grand, sublime poetry; and it is much more, as the inspired record of the thoughts of a soul seeking after God.

The reply may be divided into seven parts.

(1) The futility of Bildad's words (vers. 1–4).
(2) God's domain in the depths beneath (vers. 5,6).
(3) His sway in the heavens (ver. 7).
(4) He rules the clouds and the waters (vs. 8–10).
(5) The earth and the sea (vers. 11, 12).
(6) His victory in the sky (ver. 13).
(7) More beyond (ver. 14).

The brevity and conciseness of these words of Job enhance their beauty and force. He shows himself equal or superior to his friends in compass of thought and beauty of expression; for he also has pondered upon God in the night seasons.

(1) He first replies to Bildad's argument as it refers to himself. Admitting that he is the one "without power," of what good are the lofty words of Bildad? Do they help to solve the dark enigma of present suffering? Has he given any counsel to Job, or unravelled the tormenting mystery of God's treatment of him? The last verse seems to

intimate that Bildad may have been repeating the thoughts of Eliphaz — "Whose spirit, or breath, came from thee?" Or it may be that Job asks if this manner of speech comes from God. In these few caustic questions he fully disposes of the *argument* of his friend, if it could be called that.

(2) Bildad had dwelt upon the glories of God as displayed in the heavens; Job declares His domain in the depths. It is not "dead things," but rather the "shades," the "things under the earth" (Phil. 2: 10). This may refer to the evil spirits, to infernal things; and, according to the manner of the Old Testament, to Sheol and its inhabitants. (See Ezek. 32: 18, etc.) "Dragons and all deeps" tremble at His presence. It is folly to think of the abode of the lost as independent of God. Whether it be "the spirits [now] in prison" (1 Pet. 3: 19), or the bottomless pit, or the lake of fire, *God*, not Satan, reigns. His will at last must be obeyed. "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there" (Ps. 139: 8).

(3) Looking upward, Job still traces the footsteps of the Creator's power and wisdom. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place." The bell-like canopy of the northern skies, where the pole-star is suspended over emptiness, has no pillars to support it. In these few words, and those following, Job seems to have anticipated the great facts of astronomy regarding the earth and the heavens. He "hangeth the earth upon nothing"; how immeasurably above the cosmogonies of the heathen philosophers are these few grand words! In them

we have as in germ the discoveries of a Newton and a Keppler. It is a great mistake to think Scripture does not teach scientific truth. It teaches all needed truth, even if not in scientific language, yet with scientific accuracy.

(4) Passing from the starry heavens to those more immediately connected with the earth, Job describes in beautifully poetic, and yet scientifically accurate language, the clouds as the containing vessels for the waters above the earth. It is God who gathers the vapors of the firmament and condenses them into the thick clouds. If these waters were to be poured upon the earth without restraint, a destructive flood would be the result. He binds these waters in the clouds, and sends them down in gentle showers according to His will, and as needed by the thirsty earth.

Beyond those clouds is His throne, enshrouded from the view of our eyes: "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne" (Ps. 97: 2). But, with all his knowledge and skill, man fails to penetrate those clouds and to behold Him who sits upon His throne. Faith alone beholds Him there—the face of Him who rides on to victory.

"He compasseth the waters with bounds." These are the waters of the earth, the "great and wide sea," whose proud waves cannot pass their appointed bounds. "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth" (Ps. 104: 9). "To the boundary between light and darkness." The boundary is far distant, marked only where light merges with

darkness, "from the dim verge of the horizon." This gives a more beautiful and appropriate meaning than that of our Version.

(5) Earth with its lofty mountains, seeming to reach the sky as "the pillars of heaven," trembles beneath the word of the Mighty One. The sea is divided* by His power, and by His understanding the proud (Rahab) is pierced.

(6) Verse 13 is even more difficult than the preceding one. "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent." Delitzsch renders it, "By His breath the heavens become cheerful; His hand hath formed the fugitive dragon." But a clear meaning of the verb here translated "form," is "wound, or pierce." This accords with Isa. 27 : 1, where the thought is a blending of these two verses, 12, 13. The connection, therefore, would suggest the overthrow of the

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*This rendering of our Version, and the "arouseth" of Delitzsch, seems to contain a remarkable reference to the smiting of Egypt and the dividing of the Red Sea. "I am the Lord thy God that divided the sea, whose waves roared" (Isa. 51 : 15 ; so also Jer. 31 : 35). But in Jer. 47 : 6 the same word is rendered "quiet," and this gives a clear meaning to all these passages. If the Book of Job was reduced to writing in the days after Solomon, the reference to the passage of the Red Sea is natural. But if we retain the thought of its patriarchal date, it is more difficult to think of such a reference—for prophecy would be unlikely—especially as the entire book is singularly free from such allusions. The general thought, therefore, is preserved, which yields a clear meaning : "He stilleth the sea by His power, and by His understanding smiteth through the proud." See also chap. 9: 13. "Rahab" is the poetic name for Egypt (not, of course, the Rahab of Joshua, a different root), and this is easily derivable from the generic meaning of the word. (See Isa. 51 : 9.)

enemy—Satan, the embodiment of pride, "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan" (Rev. 20: 2). This would accord, in its spiritual meaning, with the words of Bildad, "He maketh peace in His high places" (ch. 25: 2).

On the other hand we may, as some do, apply it all to the creative power of God. He has garnished the heavens, and His hands have formed the crooked serpent—the constellation Draco, which winds about the northern skies. From the astronomical knowledge displayed in the book, this is a quite possible rendering.

A third explanation, which we mention only to reject it, is the mythological one, that the serpent, "Draco," is trying to eclipse the light of the sun by winding himself about it. God must constantly wound it, to force it to relax its hold, and the serpent flees away, allowing the heavens to shine again in their beauty! Can we think of Job making use of this superstition to express the greatness of God in language of singular beauty and truth?

The general meaning, therefore, seems clear: God is supreme in heaven as on earth; creating, controlling and delivering. Spiritually, He will overthrow all that mars His fair creation which proclaims His glory. This will be found to accord with the latter chapters of our book, where God's creative power, and His control of the elements of hostile pride, are declared by Himself (chaps. 38–41).

(7) But, in his sweeping glance, Job pauses at the heavens and the earth. After all has been said,

the half has not been told; these are "*parts* of His ways," the "edges," outskirts of His vast dominion. "But how little a portion is heard of Him," or, "How we hear but a whisper thereof." How little do we know of His greatness! We catch little whispers of His power in every passing breeze; we see some portion of His wisdom in every tiny blade of grass or drop of dew; but, could we understand, all nature is vibrant with its testimony. What a day will that be when we shall "eye to eye look on knowledge." When the majestic harmony of nature shall blend with the sweeter notes of grace, and all shall tell the glories of their Creator, the Lamb that was slain.

"When the praise of heav'n I hear,
Loud as thunder to the ear—
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harps' melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then, how much I owe."

SUBDIVISION 3.—*Job s closing monologue* (chaps. 27–31.)

The direct controversy closed with Job's reply to Bildad, chap. 26, but the sufferer has yet much to say before he has told out all his heart. The friends are apparently silenced, and he is left victor in the strife which has gone on so long. That there has been progress we have seen as we went along: on the part of the friends it has been a progress in failure to confirm their charges; with Job we have seen a progress upward, of faith laying hold on

God in spite of all that seems so dark and inexplicable.

In this closing monologue we have the manifestation of Job's heart. He vindicates himself, refusing to acknowledge the charges of his friends, and by implication declares himself the possessor of the true wisdom—the fear of the Lord. He then reviews his past life of happiness, and contrasts it with his present degradation, and closes with renewed and complete protestations of righteousness.

This portion may be divided into three sections:

(1) Assertion of integrity, in contrast with the wicked and his doom (chap. 27).

(2) The wisdom which is above all price (chap. 28).

(3) Self-manifested (chaps. 29–31).

There are certain elements of confusion in this monologue. The first part is much of the same character with what had preceded. The closing part is a sad conclusion—self-occupation, self-vindication, self-righteousness. But imbedded between these two parts we have, in grand poetic beauty, a statement of what is wisdom, the true riches, unknown to the natural man. We cannot but feel that, with all he has yet to unlearn, Job has the elements of this wisdom. The root of the matter is in him, the pure gold is there, and the dross will soon be removed.

Section 1.—Assertion of integrity, in contrast with the wicked and his doom (chap. 27).

This chapter while forming part of the monologue, is closely linked with the reply to Bildad.

We may consider it as addressed to the friends as a whole—a summing up of the controversy.

There are four main parts:

(1) He maintains his righteousness (vers. 1–7).

(2) The wicked's character contrasted (vers. 8–12).

(3) The sure doom of the ungodly (vers. 13–18).

(4) Driven away in his wickedness (vers. 19–23).

There is an apparent lack of evenness in this section, and some have thought a lack of consistency with what Job has previously declared. The self-vindication is familiar enough, but when he begins to describe the character and doom of the wicked, we might almost imagine that one of the friends was speaking. Indeed, the latter half of the chapter has been considered as the third speech of Zophar, inadvertently dropped from its place and inserted here, with chapter 28 as Job's answer. But there is not the slightest indication of any such disturbance of the text. It is a theory used to explain an imagined difficulty, a difficulty whose solution is found in the study of the chapter itself.

(1) Job declares that he will never surrender to the unrighteous charges of the friends. Boldly he declares that God has taken away his right (not as in our version, his judgment), that is, has acted unjustly toward him; He has brought bitterness into the soul of one who did not deserve it!

The next verse, 3, has been variously rendered. In the A. V. Job is made to say that so long as his breath is in him, he will persist in maintaining his righteousness. But many regard the verse as a parenthetic explanation; "for still all my breath is in me," etc. He is in full possession of his con-

sciousness, and speaks the truth deliberately, as he believes. Such a rendering and explanation seems to accord with the original.

He will not allow himself to bear false witness; till he dies he will hold fast his integrity. His heart does not condemn him, and in the survey of his past life there is not a day whose record furnishes ground for reproach. "My heart reproacheth not any of my days." We must take this as the sober statement of one who had "lived in all good conscience." But there is a sound of self-righteousness which does not accord with the knowledge of one's self in the presence of God. Job is not *there* yet. It is the cry of an honest soul that does not fully see the light. Is there any unrighteousness? — it is in his enemy, not in himself. We see therefore that Job was speaking as between man and man.

(2) Job now turns to the end of the wicked. What hope has he when God cuts him off, and takes away his soul? What shall be the end of the man to whom God says, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee?" Will God hear his cry when it is too late? Or has He not given the solemn warning, "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. 1: 26)? Is it too late to call upon God when the present opportunities have been put off for a "more convenient season"—which never comes.

Is not all this self-evident? Job asks them. Do they not know the Lord's ways? Why then do they indulge in such foolish and wrong thoughts as they had expressed, and charge him (a man

whose uprightness they knew, and who was conscious of his own integrity) with having a character like this which he describes?

Here we reach the explanation of the apparent change in Job's attitude. Hitherto he had withstood the friends in their contention as to the wicked, because they ever linked *him* with their descriptions. He will now take up the same language to show how impossible it was to confound such an one as himself with the wicked with whom they identified him. It becomes thus a most potent reply to their charges. He had dwelt upon the many exceptions to God's dealings with the wicked, because the friends were making such a wrong use of these dealings. The force of what he says comes out even more strongly in the next portion.

(3) He now goes into the terrible and irrevocable doom that awaits the ungodly, and, in language equal to that of the friends, tells how they will at last be overtaken.

"This is the portion of the wicked man with *God*." He has received wealth and pleasure and honor at the hands of man; but how different a heritage will they get from the Almighty whom they have despised. Have his children multiplied? They are left to the devouring sword. Did they once live in luxury? They will come to lack bread, and those who survive them will be swallowed up by death, and without friendly lamentations—"Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation" (Ps. 78: 64).

Job thus dwells upon a sorrow in some respects similar to his own, and yet how different. He too

had been bereft of his children, but was it as under the retributive wrath of God? And did Job act as these wicked men whom he here describes? *They* may gather silver and wealth as the dust, only to have the righteous enjoy it—"The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." Was Job's case thus? Had the righteous obtained the wealth which once was his? The grand dwellings of the ungodly, like the frail tenement of the moth, shall crumble into nothingness, or be as the watchman's transient booth, "as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." The fact that Job can speak thus of the perishing things of this world's greatness shows that he was conscious of a far different heritage for himself. Let moth and rust corrupt, he seems to say that he knows he has a better and more enduring substance.

(4) He follows in his solemn description the course of the wicked to the end. The rich man lieth down not realizing it is for the last time. He lies down in usual comfort, he opens his eyes upon a new day, but not to resume the old employments and pleasures. He opens his eyes only to pass away. Those eyes, so long closed to all that God has witnessed, at last open to another world—"In hell (hades) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

Terror, so long kept at a distance as the warning voice of conscience spoke, now sweeps down upon him; as by a tempest in the night he is carried away. God brings him down, and men rejoice at the removal of their oppressor.

Thus Job calmly describes an end which he knows is not his. What has made the difference? Is it

not the faith which amidst all his distress has held fast to God?—a God whom he so little knew, and at whose afflictions he had repined.

Section 2.—The wisdom which is above all price (chap. 28.)

Continuing his monologue, Job next contrasts the doom of the ungodly rich, as described in the previous chapter, with the true riches, which can never be lost. The connection is clear, and the transition natural and striking. The opening part of the chapter describes the toil and care with which men search for the "delved gold," which so often brings but the "strife and curse which o'er it fall." He then passes on to the true riches—wisdom; where shall *it* be found? The search for it in earth or sea is vain; nor can all the wealth of the world be compared with it. Where is this priceless treasure to be found? Even the dark shades of death can only witness to its existence, but do not tell how or where to secure it. It can only be gained through the revelation of God; not only in His works, but in His Word, He appeals to the conscience and heart of man. The whole passage is beautiful and noble in its conception and expression, and indicates that the one who speaks knows that blessed One whom he describes. This chapter would prove that Job could not be the hypocrite his friends would make him out to be.

The entire chapter however is outside the atmosphere of controversy. Job is not here seeking to maintain his righteousness, but, for the time at least, loses sight of himself, and breathes the pure

air of truth, unmarred by the noxious fumes of self-righteousness and unbelief. We can but feel the moral elevation of it all.

The chapter may be divided into seven portions.

1. The treasures of earth (vers. 1–6).
2. The hidden treasure (vers. 7–11).
3. Not revealed by nature (vers. 12–14).
4. Its priceless value tested (vers. 15–19).
5. Its report (vers. 20–22).
6. The Revealer (vers. 23–27).
7. The Revelation (ver. 28).

1. Job is evidently acquainted with all the processes of mining, whether from the rich deposits in the Sinai peninsula, or the nearer ones of the rocky regions of Bashan and Syria. He knows and describes the difficult and dangerous search for these treasures of earth, the "gold which perisheth." All this is knowledge acquired by man, who spares no toil nor danger to gain the coveted stores.

There is a mine for silver, the "current money with the merchant." How much labor is represented in that shining white metal used so largely in the East as the medium of exchange. Alas, of that of which it is a type (the redemption-price for the soul of man, Ex. 30 : 11–16; 38 : 25–28) men know little and care less. Of this however Job does not speak.

Gold, too, refined in the fire and made into ornaments of beauty and the kingly crown, men will travel to the ends of the earth for it. The true gold, the righteousness of God in Christ, is treated by most as valueless. Iron, so much needed in

every department of labor, is laboriously prepared from the dust of the earth. Man labors for these earthly necessities, but forgets Him in whom alone is strength. Brass, or copper, with its unyielding strength, was and is melted from the containing stones; but the unchanging judgments of God are little valued by men.

In his search after these treasures, man delves into the dark recesses of the earth with his lamp, making an end to the darkness as he penetrates into the farthest extremities (rather than "perfection") of the mines, searching for those ore-laden "stones of darkness"—stones hidden in the darkness. The bowels of the earth are like the shadow of death, and often entomb the hardy miner in their depths, but nothing holds him back. Men will give their lives for gold. They are not content with the fertile earth yielding food for man's need; they tear it and search its depths as a fire burning and destroying. Such seems to be the clear meaning of verse 5. It is wealth, gold, jewels, glory, that man seeks after, and for which he is ready to barter his very life and soul. A glance at the history of the mining camps of modern times will confirm all that is said by the patriarch. What covetousness, lust, violence, reign in these places, in the arid mountains of the West and the frozen land of Yukon. What a contrast to the peaceful pursuits of gathering the bountiful harvests God has provided upon the very surface of the earth. The typical and spiritual teaching here is very clear: "Having food and raiment (covering), let us be therewith content." It is not meant of course that these pre-

cious things are sinful in themselves, nor that their proper use is not necessary. But the restless craving for them is significant of the poor heart of man, seeking for what can never satisfy. If he had but used the same earnestness in seeking for the true riches, how different would be the result. "My son . . . if thou criest after knowledge, . . . if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord" (Prov. 2: 1–5).

2. This portion (vers. 7–11) has been by Delitzsch connected closely with the preceding, as describing the search after earth's precious stores, and part of it does go into further details; but the similarity of ver. 21 to vers. 7, 8, suggests that even thus early in the chapter Job is hinting at his main theme—the true riches. Verse 12 confirms this thought. We therefore accept it.

There is a way—another way than in the depths of earth, or the loftiest mountain crags—the way of wisdom. We have seen that man does not get it in the mines; here it is unknown to the birds and beasts. As we see the eagle high in air, with vision far wider than ours, there may come into our hearts a longing to soar like it above the earth, and to see what we do not here.

But those heights do not reveal what man must know in order to be happy. The boundless deserts, where the proud lion roams unfettered by the fear of man, disclose no treasure which the heart craves. The hermits, "desert dwellers," have failed to get peace to their souls by their fastings and immolation of the body.

Returning to the search for treasure, Job describes this fruitless quest in which man takes hold upon the rocks (possibly pebbles), and overturns the mountains. We see him washing and sifting the pebbles and sand, or blasting in the solid mountains. He cuts his way deep down, following the vein as a river in its course, and looking with greedy eyes upon the rich shining treasures locked up therein. If waters flow in, he finds a way to divert them, that he may pursue the hidden wealth thus laid bare.

Again we ask, why will not men labor thus for the "hidden wisdom?" Why will they not seek to sift it out as it lies so close by, or, if need be, in faith remove the very mountains of difficulty. If the sweeping rush of "the course of this world," as a river, would engulf the true riches, why do men not stop it, or turn it from them, that they may possess themselves of this whose value is above all wealth? "He that seeketh findeth," is still true, though the seeking and the finding are different from what the toil for gold would indicate. The wisdom is hidden, the way to it is not known, because *God* is not known, and men will not hearken to Him.

3. But while man is told to seek, this wisdom is not found in nature, nor by human effort. The question is asked, Where is wisdom found? Where is the place where understanding has its abode? Man, frail mortal, knows not and has not the price to obtain it, for it is not found in the land of the living. If it were within reach, then some would be able to attain to it; some rich man would have

the price to pay for it. But it is beyond man; "It is high, I cannot attain unto it." In the fathomless depths of the abyss—"the waters under the earth" —the call for wisdom awakens but the reply, "It is not in me." The wide sea, in all its vast expanse, holds not this priceless treasure. Nature, in itself, is powerless to furnish a simple clue to this heavenly, this wondrous good.

What then is this wisdom, of such infinite value, and yet so unattainable? We shall be told in a little while by the Author of it. It must suffice us here to say it is the knowledge of the truth, the nature of all things, obtained from God Himself; a knowledge which does not puff up, nor separate from God, but gives the soul a living principle of peace and joy in communion with Him. No wonder man would search and toil in vain for this priceless treasure.

And yet, when once God is known, we find all nature eloquent of Him. Those depths below and above declare His glory and power. The "great and wide sea" tells of the depth of His wisdom, care and goodness. The earth, with its myriad forms of life, speaks of Him as the Author and maintainer of all life, from the lowest vegetable form up to the highest spiritual intelligence. The great creation psalm (104) declares this: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (ver. 24). How sad it is to see men of vast knowledge, of profound reasoning powers, gazing into the glorious heavens and failing to find God or wisdom there, or analyzing the dust of the earth

yet not perceiving Him who "wrought by weight and measure." Truly the words of the apostle state the solemn fact: "The world by wisdom (human knowledge) knew not God" (1 Cor. 1 : 21). How blessed it is then to have the true wisdom—"Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God;" to know Him through that Cross which sets aside all of man's pride, his wisdom and his righteousness, and gives in its place the key to all truth—"the unsearchable riches of Christ."

We do but anticipate the full Christian revelation in speaking thus. If Job had not so wide a view, he at least had the germ of that to be revealed later on.

4. A thing of such priceless value is now tested by all that man counts treasure. Pure gold and silver, weighed out in unstinted measure cannot purchase it. The fine gold of Ophir, the precious onyx and the sapphire—"a king's ransom"—have no place here. Again gold is mentioned, along with transparent crystal—"pure gold, as it were transparent glass"—jewels as beautiful as rare; corals, pearls, rubies—wisdom's price exceeds them all. The topaz of far off Ethiopia finds its lustre dim beside this bright jewel of God's glory. Nature is ransacked in vain to find something to compare with that whose price is above all earthly treasures. Would that men realized this, that they might find the one jewel of eternal value. All else is nothing without it.

"Were the vast world our own,
With all its varied store,
And Thou, Lord Jesus, wert unknown,
We still were poor."

5. But why speak of that which all searching cannot find, or wealth cannot buy? The question of verse 12 is repeated, not hopelessly, but to show man the futility of a merely natural quest. "Whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?" Nature indeed speaks of wisdom, but does not communicate it—

> "Stars o'er us are silent,
> Graves silent beneath us."

And yet, had the poet but ears to hear, those graves would at least whisper back a hint that the present life was not all—that wisdom lies beyond time. "Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears." How true it is that those who consider their latter end are near to wisdom, ready to receive the revelation which God gives. This is the wisdom which cometh down from above, and is given to the meek.

6. We turn now from nature to its Author, from creation to God. He knoweth the way, and He alone can reveal it to man. Nor is it merely God as Creator, but as Revealer in the person of His Son —"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He has said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes . . . No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." He it is whose all-seeing eye sweeps the heavens, who has given its weight to the viewless air, and its appointed proportions to the water, who sends the gentle rain, and with it gives a course to the light-

ning's flash. *He* has seen wisdom; nay, He *is* that Wisdom.

We cannot but be reminded of the grand passage in Prov. 8, in which this divine Person, the true Wisdom, declares His character and power. "When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth; when He established the clouds above . . . then I was by Him as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight . . . And my delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8: 27–31).*

7. What then is the true wisdom? What does God declare it to be? It is most significant that it it is not *mere* truth, but truth applied to the conscience, truth which puts man in his true place, and thus fits and enables him to receive what God has to say. The fear of the Lord (*Adonai*, the supreme Ruler and Master) is wisdom—the bowing in humiliation before Him in whose presence seraphim veil their faces, before whom Isaiah cried, "Woe is me, for I am undone." This fear is not mere dread, but reverence, submission, worship. It includes repentance, as evidenced in the words

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* The similarity of this and other passages in Proverbs to portions of Job, especially the chapter we are considering, has given color to the theory that both books date from the same period, of *Chokma*, or wisdom. Taken reverently, the word of God allows such questions; but when men go further, and doubt the authenticity or authorship of books declared to be written by certain men, as Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, etc., faith turns from the whole as dangerous and unholy speculation. It is also significant that as second in the Experience Books, Job is closely connected with the *Chokma* writings.

of the thief: "Dost not thou *fear* God?" To know God thus is preparatory to and inclusive of the knowledge of His mercy and grace—for us the full knowledge of the gospel, and accompanying Christian revelation. It is not knowledge *of* God, but being brought *to* Him, and learning His grace and love. This is more than mere knowledge; it is the key to it; it is eternal life.

That Job could speak thus, shows that he had in some measure this wisdom, could not therefore be classed with the wicked. But how feebly had he grasped the great fact of which he had spoken. A little later this fear of the Lord will lead him indeed "to depart from evil"—from an evil heart and from *himself*. That was for him, as it is for us, the true wisdom. With this wisdom we can pass over the earth, or search beneath its depths, can cross the seas, or soar towards heaven, only to find God and His witness everywhere.

It is this moral character which marks out God's word as distinct from all other writings. It is addressed to the conscience of man, producing that "fear of the Lord," which is clean, enduring forever."

Section 3.—Self-manifested (chaps. 29–31).

As already pointed out, there is greater or less inconsistency in Job's monologue, corresponding to the state of his heart, in which conflicting emotions, of conscious integrity before man, and of the fear of the Lord, are mingled with unhealthy reminiscences of past greatness and laments over present degradation. The general tone, however,

shows the need of God's dealing with his soul, and prepares us for what follows.

In this third section we have the manifestation of the man, the thoughts that nestled in his bosom, and while he concludes with unanswerable protestations of integrity, the impression left upon our mind is painful. The section may be divided into three parts, manifesting progressive stages of self-occupation.

1. Past greatness (chap. 29).
2. Present shame (chap. 30).
3. I am clean (chap. 31).

We may remark upon the entire section that Job is occupied with the wrong person. Even if all that he said were true—and we have no reason to doubt it was sincerely spoken—it ill becomes a man to dwell upon his own state. Unfallen man's happiness was to continue in God's goodness; turning from that, he fell into disobedience. For a sinner to dwell upon his own goodness—of which he has none—is repulsive; and for a child of God to follow the same course, shows clearly that he has not yet learned his lesson. All this comes out clearly in the chapters we are considering.

1. *Past greatness*

Taking up these in order, we find in chapter 29 a number of distinctly marked divisions.

(1) Prosperity at home (vers. 1–6).
(2) Honor abroad (vers. 7–10).
(3) His benefactions praised him (vers. 11–17).

(4) Abiding prosperity in view (vers. 18–20).

(5) A comforter for the distressed (vers. 21–25).

(1) It is nearly always a sign of present decrepitude if we are obliged to look backward to the past for marks of God's favor. It is apt to be connected with pride in that past, as well as with discouragement in the present. In the things of God, we enjoy His personal favor; His lamp shines about us now; His blessing is upon our tribulation, and the future opens out sweetly before us—"we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." If we dwell upon the past, it is rather upon the grace which has saved us. The Christian's motto is, "Reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. 3). Paul's past, in which he had gloried—in Judaism—he now counted loss for Christ. Even past service, communion and joy in Christ, is left behind. The manna of yesterday will not do for to-day. The bright light of yesterday's candle is the burnt wick of to-day. A present Christ in all His fulness; a present Spirit ministering the Word to our need—these are the believer's proper theme and occupation. Job thus at the outset is looking in the wrong direction.

Ver. 4 is literally, "in the days of autumn," and does not refer to the beginning of the civil year, but rather to the rich time of ingathering, of ripe maturity, when all was prosperous about him. His children, as described in the first chapter, were about him; he luxuriated in the abundance of his resources.

(2) Having surveyed his former prosperity at home, Job now, in memory, passes out of his gates

to take his preeminent place among his fellows. It is pitiful to hear a truly great man describing his supremacy over others. The young men hid themselves, the elders rose up and remained standing until he took his seat. Ah, had not this sense of his greatness fostered a pride in Job which made his downfall a necessary dealing of God? He was a prince of princes; nobles were struck dumb in his presence! He is describing his place among the councillors of the city; he was their president and chief.

(3) But this eminence was not due to wisdom and dignity alone. The ear which heard his voice blessed him; the eye looked upon a benefactor and a friend. It is indeed a beautiful picture, but marred by the pride of personal recital. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth." Job had won the respect and affection of all. He had been a succorer of the helpless, a friend of the orphan and the widow. He clothes himself with righteousness as with a garment, and binds it as a crown upon his brow. Verily, these are strong words, savoring little of the humility which becomes us. Job was a combination of the "righteous" man for whom one would scarcely die, and of the "good," benevolent man for whom, perhaps, some would even dare to die. Eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, diligently seeking out obscure cases of need; and withal meting out severe penalty upon the wrong-doer—truly he was a model man! *But*, for us, let it be far from us to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(4) All this honor, coupled with beneficence on

his part, made life very attractive to Job. The inevitable end, put off to a great distance, would find him comfortable in his "nest." He would prolong the days of his life as a multitude of grains of the sand, or, as some would have it, as the phoenix—the immortal bird of fable. The rendering of our version gives a simple and more worthy rendering, and one conformed to the usage of Scripture (1 Ki. 4: 29; Gen. 22: 17). Another suggestion is that Job refers to the palm tree — "The righteous shall flourish as the palm tree." In any case the meaning is obvious: he would live on uninterruptedly and as a well-watered tree. So would the freshness of the dew be his, and his bow would abide in strength.

(5) The remainder of the chapter seems to recur to his greatness and wisdom. But there is a slight advance over the former expressions. The effect of his decisions is seen upon his beneficiaries rather than his fellow-councillors. His decision was for them the final word, calling for no response; and yet his words were not like the withering sentence of an inexorable judge, but like the gentle dew or the rain. His smile was as a ray of light to them. The thought here is slightly obscure. Does Job mean to say that his smile was a blessing to them; or the token of his abiding self-complacency? The usual thought, however, is not obscure. If they were in doubt and trouble, his smile reassured them, and no grief on their part could alter his imperturbable cheerfulness. He was as a king among them, regarded with a reverence akin to worship.

Ah, but where was all this honor now? It could but intensify Job's present misery.

> "This is truth the poet sings,
> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow
> Is remembering happier things."

The ashes of his past joys can give no warmth to his poor comfortless heart to-day; they can but feed the flame of that pride which burns all the more brightly amid the ruin of its past.

2.—*Present shame* (chap. 30).

Dwell upon the past as long he may, Job is at last forced to turn to the present with its wretched contrast. This portion may be divided into seven parts, giving the thought of complete misery, which thus exceeds his former greatness.

(1) His wretched mockers (vers. 1–8).
(2) Their scorn (vers. 9–12).
(3) Their persecution (vers. 13–15).
(4) His sufferings (vers. 16–19).
(5) No help from God (vers. 20–23).
(6) The triumph of misery (vers. 24–27).
(7) Complete woe (vers. 28–31).

(1) Job's words as to his former greatness were in description of his beneficent pity for the wretched outcasts to whom he ministered comfort and cheer. Passing into the present, he seems to have changed places with these, or those like them, and in turn speaks of them not with the language of sympathy but of deepest contempt. Pride speaks of them—"whose fathers I would have disdained to have set

with the dogs of my flock." Their *elders* were beneath his contempt, and now the younger have *him* in derision. The verses following describe these wretched persons who now exalt themselves above him. They are weak and unprofitable—as decrepit old age. Withered up from hunger, they gnaw the roots of weeds growing in the waste which for long has ceased to yield true food for man. The mallows, or salt wort, and the sedge, or juniper, have become their food. These are the contemptible wretches which mock him who once was so great. Driven from men as thieves, their habitation in valleys and dark holes, croaking or braying as beasts—these outcasts pour their contempt upon him! It is a hideous picture, reminding us of One who in a far different spirit said, "I was the song of the drunkards" (Ps. 69: 12). But in Job there is no turning to God in such unjust treatment. Evidently the wound to his pride, in having such a rabble mock him, is the deepest of his mental sufferings. He had previously described persons like these (chap. 24) as illustrating the unequal lot that comes upon men and as showing the oppression of the prosperous wicked. But he is not here the advocate of these downtrodden men; his own soul is writhing under their contempt. It is a sad picture of pride, which grows bitter as it dwells upon its wrongs.

(2) Scorn them as he may, Job is compelled to acknowledge that he is mocked by them, their song and their byword. We can but compare his anger at their taunts with the meekness of Him "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He

suffered, He threatened not." All through life our Lord had the shadows of man's rejection falling upon Him, but in His darkest hour—"your hour and the power of darkness"—they poured out their maledictions and their taunts. But He, as One that heard not, "gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50: 6). Who is it that said this? Not a man lamenting over former grandeur, but one who had voluntarily relinquished His glory in love for His enemies, who could at any moment have delivered Himself from His troubles by an appeal to His Father or by the putting forth of His own power. "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26: 54). We need only to meditate upon such words to see the pitiful petulance of Job in painful contrast. In all his sufferings Job felt, as he had frequently declared, the hand of God upon him, and he connects this with the scorn of these abject men who took advantage of God's dealings to vent their hatred upon him. "God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him." The "rabble" (as the word has been rendered) press upon his right hand, they thrust his feet away from their only standing-place, and lift up their own destructive ways. We can only again remark how unlike Job was to our blessed Lord in similar circumstances.

(3) The scorn and mockery, which we have seen increasing in violence, now bursts out in a storm of persecution. These puny, helpless men turn now in violence upon him; they tear down his path—

destroy the way of one whose footsteps had "well-nigh slipped." They would contribute to his overthrow. They burst upon him like a flood breaking through restraining banks; they roll over him with the deafening noise of their tramp. "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid." Like a pack of cowardly wolves they pounce upon the fallen man, whose soul, or rather "nobility," is swept aside as by a fierce hurricane; "Like a cloud my prosperity passed away." This is beautiful poetry, abounding in bold images; but Job does not show himself to advantage. The weakness of his spirit is seen in the lack of dignity with which he undergoes his misfortunes. Evidently his faith is in eclipse. This is apparent in what follows.

(4) His soul is poured out, and days of suffering are his portion. The nights are no better, for the gnawing disease does not sleep as it bares his bones out of his very flesh. His garment is no longer an adornment, but clings to his emaciated body, as his collar discloses the poor bony neck. It is all vivid as a picture, and as repulsive. All this Job ascribes to God. It is *His* great force which has thus emaciated him and laid his honor in the dust. *He* has brought him into the mire and made him as worthless as the dust and ashes in which he sits. Do we hear him taking counsel with his soul in this time of suffering?—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. 42: 11). No; instead of encouraging himself thus, he accuses his Maker.

(5) He cries to Him for help, but no answer comes from above. He stands in all his wretchedness before God, who looks upon him but does not pity. This is the force of ver. 20. It is not merely "Thou regardest me not;" the negative is not in the original; God *does* regard him, in the sense of looking upon him and remaining unmoved by his woes. "Thou changest Thyself to a cruel being toward me." Oh, if Job had but known the tender love which would have spared him from all this suffering, but for his own good! He knows not that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." That will come when he sees "the end of the Lord"—the purpose that is in view (Jas. 5: 11). Now he can only see that strong hand reached out to make war against him. It is this stormy wind which lifts up the frail sufferer as chaff and drives him along to vanish in the warring storm. Beautiful poetry indeed, but wretched unbelief this is. Job sees nothing before him but death, the house appointed for all living. His faith seems to have suffered a great eclipse. May we not see the reason of this in that self-occupation which marks these two chapters and the next?

(6) His misery is complete; it rises over all other thoughts. Verse 24—whose meaning is obscure in the A. V.—has been rendered: "No prayer availeth when He stretcheth out His hand; though they cry when He destroyeth." That is, it is useless to cry to Him for pity, for He will not regard the prayer of those upon whose destruction He is bent. It is a most hopeless view of God, of which Job has shown he is quite capable. Delitzsch, however,

renders it as though Job is explaining his cries. Is it not natural for one to reach forth his hand for help? So he translates: "Doth not one, however, stretch out the hand in falling; doth he not raise a cry for help on that account, in his ruin?" This suits with what follows: he is only asking what *he* had shown to others in their time of stress—he has wept for those in trouble and grieved for the needy. He sums up his misery in verses 26, 27. In his prosperity he had looked forward for good all his days; instead of that, misery had overtaken him, darkness instead of the wished-for light. Instead of a heart at rest, his inner man was a seething caldron of anguish—"Days of misery met me."

(7) At last we reach the end of the wail—the last of those laments which pierce the heart. He pictures himself as a lonely wanderer in the dark, a companion of beasts and birds which shun the face of man. He might well hide from them, for his skin drops off his putrid flesh; his very bones are parched and dry. Such misery must surely appeal to the most stolid. Must these friends not listen to such woe, and have pity? Job has sounded all the depths of his suffering and grief; his harp has no notes but the sad wail of mourning; his pipe leads in no dance, it is turned alone to notes of sorrow.

Thus the wail ends in a threnody of sadness, without a note of faith. Oh, let us thank our God that Another has lifted His voice out of deeper darkness than all that pressed upon Job with words of sweet assurance, "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" "Father,

into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Jno. 18: 11; Luke 23: 46). To Him—our Saviour, our Lord, our all—we turn, and learn in our grief to say, "Thy will be done."

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 17, 18).

3.—*I am clean* (chap. 31).

We come now to the closing portion of Job's monologue. In the first part he had dwelt upon his former greatness and goodness; in the second part he contrasted it with his present wretched state; in both these he finds food for pride; its climax is reached in the present chapter, where he asserts his purity, goodness and righteousness in the completest way. There is no bitterness as when in his former replies he resented the accusations of his friends, nor vain crying of injustice at the hands of God. Quickly, deliberately and thoroughly he surveys his life and character, and comes to the conclusion that he welcomes both the indictment of man and the judgment of God.

We cannot question the truth and the sincerity of all that he says, but, we may well ask, is his conclusion a happy one even for himself? He closes the mouths of his friends, he seems abundantly

satisfied with himself; suppose God were to let it go at that, is the spectacle of a completely self-vindicated man a pleasant one? Ah, divine truth, as well as divine love, will not suffer him to wrap himself in these weeds of self-righteousness. They are, for the most part, borrowed garments belonging to God, to whom Job gives not one whit of glory; and all the rest is but "filthy rags" which belong to the dust and ashes where Job is soon to put himself.

In other words, God is left out save as related to Job's righteousness: His greatness, goodness, holiness, as themes of worship and joy are ignored. At the close of all that he has to say, Job is as far from God as at the beginning; nay, further. When we remember that all God's ways with man are to bring him close to Himself, we see the folly and sin of Job's course. No wonder that other voices with other themes must be heard before the "end of the Lord" is reached.

But let us seek to analyze this last portion of Job's monologue, and gather sober lessons for ourselves from the vain effort of this best of men. Surely the lesson must be, "Cease ye from man."

The main subjects of the chapter group themselves under seven heads:

(1) Asseveration of chastity and uprightness (vers. 1–12).

(2) Kindness at home and abroad (vers. 13–23).

(3) Refusal of all forms of idolatry (vers. 24–28).

(4) Friendship and hospitality (vers. 29–32).

(5) No hypocrisy or fear of man (vers. 33, 34).

(6) A challenge to man and to God (vers. 35–37).
(7) His very land a witness for him (vers. 38–40).

(1) In opening this sevenfold protestation of purity and integrity, Job dwells upon a side of his character and conduct which even his friends had not openly challenged. Whatever intimations they have made of general wickedness—turning from God, violent dealings with the needy and others—the subject of personal purity had not been touched upon.

But if Job is to be vindicated before man and God, surely this department of his life must be investigated. He approaches it with the boldness of conscious innocence. His eyes, the avenue to the heart, had been closed by full purpose—a "covenant," against even a look at what might stir up passion. Our Lord in the "sermon on the mount," had shown that essential purity must lie in the heart, and not merely in abstinence in outward conduct (Matt. 5: 27, 28). Asserting his purity, Job points out that he was moved by the fear of God, who would surely recompense sin upon the wicked. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" said Joseph when assailed by the temptress (Gen. 39: 9). In an hour of spiritual sloth, David had allowed his eyes to wander, and had fallen (2 Sam. 11: 2). Job was conscious that God watched his every step, and appeals to Him to be tested, weighed in the balance (vers. 5,6). He seems here to speak of general integrity, and in the two following verses, but returns to the general subject with which he began, and dwells

upon the sin of adultery against a neighbor (vers. 9–12). In all he was pure—willing to have his own home violated if such were not the case. We get here a glimpse of his family life, equaling in sanctity that of Isaac, Joseph, and the purest of the patriarchs.

But we must take note of the self-righteousness which moved Job to speak of himself thus. He was arraying *himself* rather than giving glory to God. Doubtless at bottom he was a man of genuine piety, but it is not glory to set forth one's own glory.

(2) He enlarges here on what he had already dwelt upon—denied by his friends—his benevolence, kindness and uprightness. Beginning with the household whose well-ordered character was the outgrowth of the inherent purity of its master, he asserts his equity in all his dealings with his servants, recognizing their common nature and standing before God "who is no respecter of persons." Passing out to the needy poor, the fatherless and the widow had shared his food, and he had warmed them with his clothing. In brief he was as a father to the orphan, and as a son to the widow. Surely we have here an illustration of "pure religion and undefiled" (Jas. 1: 27).

While dwelling upon his beneficence, Job shows how he had not taken advantage of any legal technicality which would have exonerated him in any severe dealing with the needy. When he saw his "help in the gate,"—the judges disposed to decide in his favor, not as bribed, but giving him his just dues—he had not carried his case against

the orphans. If he had lifted his hand against them, he says, "let mine arm drop from my shoulder-blade."

To all of this we can but say, True and excellent, but why should *he* speak of it? Why not let his fear of God keep him from these things, rather than boast of them?

(3) Having declared his benevolence, Job naturally passes on to speak of wealth, and disclaims the love of gold so common to man; that "covetousness which is idolatry" (Col. 3: 5). When his riches had increased, he had not set his heart upon them; gold had not allured him. And when he lifted up his eyes to the resplendent heavens, he had not given the glory to the sun, a creature of God, nor to the moon, "queen of heaven," walking in splendor; nor even secretly wafted a kiss of worship to them, for God would have been denied thereby; he would have been a hypocrite, well deserving punishment.

(4) Job's strong point is his kindness to his fellow-men. Here he declares that even to his enemies he had been just. He had not been glad at their calamity, nor even in secret wished a curse to blight their life. He could call the men of his own household to bear witness. Had any one ever said they knew a hungry man whom he had not satisfied with his own food? No stranger was ever left beside his home in the street; his door was ever open to them—in our modern colloquialism, "the latch string was always outside."

(5) Job now declares his complete openness. He was not afraid of the great, did nothing behind

closed doors which he would not have declared publicly. He had not acted as men so generally do, hiding their sins from the eye of man—or, as our version and many render the words, "as Adam," who hid from the presence of God to conceal the shame of his guilt. Job walked in the light, where all could see him.

(6) He thus reaches the climax: he is chaste, just, God-fearing, kind, sincere—what has he to fear? He challenges all; would that he had one to hear him. "Behold my signature!" he cries. I sign my name to the catalogue of my virtues. "Let the Almighty answer me!" "Let mine adversary produce his charges in writing."

We cannot believe that any but a true man could thus challenge his accusers. If God be his adversary, let Him write the charges in a book! Job would carry it on his shoulder in triumph, as a mark of dignity, or as a diadem upon his brow! He would disport himself as a prince with it!

Yet we need only wait a little to hear this 'prince" saying: "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but *now* mine eye seeth Thee."

Job's thoughts are mixed: he is not exactly meeting God as a sinner, but as one who is conscious of "the root of the matter" in his heart. His mistake is to confound this with his own personal worthiness, and thus mar the very thought of grace. Who of all the sons of men could stand before a thrice holy God, and say "I am clean?" "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

(7) The conclusion seems almost tame, for after the appeal to God and man, Job descends to inani-

mate earth. He appeals to his land to bear witness if he has acquired it unjustly, or used its yield as his own which belonged to another; if he has taken away property from another (as Ahab took the vineyard and life of Naboth), let the very furrows weep out their charge, let the fertile soil yield thistles instead of wheat, tares instead of barley.

It has even been suggested that Job appeals to the land to declare if he has treated *it* unkindly, so that it needed a Sabbath-rest—"Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths;" but the first meaning seems the simplest.

"The words of Job are ended." He had called upon earth and man, yea, upon God, to declare his righteousness. He would have all unite to sing *his* praise! How different from that happy time when all nature shall speak forth the praises of the Lord, the King. "Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth" (Ps. 96: 12, 13). Let us turn from the self-praise of Job to pay our tribute of worship "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; *to Him* be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1: 5, 6).

Job's words will be rightly ended when he is ready to give praise to the One who alone is worthy of it. We are glad to be through with Job's words as uttered here.

Division III. (Chaps. 32–37).

The manifestation of God's character of holiness and of mercy, as exhibited in the testimony of Elihu.

We have now reached a most important and interesting division of the entire book—the mediatorial address of Elihu. That we are justified in so speaking of it will be seen as we follow him in his noble words for God, and his searching and helpful words for Job. He reminds Job of his own desire for such a person: "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (chap. 9: 33); "Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor" (chap. 16: 21). To this desire Elihu now replies: "Behold, I am according to thy wish, in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay. Behold my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee" (chap. 33: 6, 7).

The appropriateness of Elihu's entrance just here is evident. The friends had been silenced, but apparently unconvinced; Job is left master of the situation, so far as self-vindication could give him such a place; and yet not only was the dark enigma unsolved, but God's character had been obscured. If the book had closed at this point, we would have had more difficulties raised than settled, and unbelief would have lurked among the grand but melancholy shades of the controversy, as it does to this point. On the other hand, if God had spoken directly, revealing Himself in majesty and power, as in the following division, the transition would

have been too sudden, and Job's fear of being terrorized by His glory might have been justified.

Elihu therefore fits exactly into his place, giving another illustration of the divine authorship and perfection of the book. His address fittingly occupies the *third* place, for it is the moral manifestation of God, the display of His character, thus leading us out of the conflict of human thought on the one side, and preparing us for the right view of the "Faithful Creator" on the other.

In accordance with what has just been said, we find the address partakes, in its first part, of the style of the controversy between Job and his friends, though far different in other respects. At the close it is almost conformed to the words of Jehovah, dealing, as it does, with the grand displays of His glory and power as seen in the works of nature.

It seems strange that any other thought of Elihu could have been entertained, and yet from earliest times Christian expositors have held most contradictory views. Many have pointed out the fitness and wisdom of all that he says, but others have spoken of him as an impudent intruder—a young man puffed up with a sense of his own learning and importance! Elihu's appearance is styled "an uncalled-for stumbling in of a conceited young philosopher into the conflict that is already properly ended; the silent contempt with which one allows him to speak, is the merited reward of a babbler!"

If such contentions have a spark of truth in them, why is nothing said in the book about Elihu? Why is not he made to bring an offering with the three

friends, and secure Job's intercession? Or is he too far gone even for such recovery? It has been said indeed that God rebukes him in the beginning of His reply: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge" (chap. 38 : 2)? But this reply is to *Job*, not Elihu, and Job so recognizes it. It has also been said that Elihu himself is thrown into confusion by the appearing of Jehovah, and becomes incoherent and inane (chap. 37: 19–24). We can only reply that to argue thus shows that one has failed to grasp the beauty of a most transcendent passage, viewed either as poetry or as the language of inspiration. But we turn from all this to look at the details which now come before us.

Elihu's address is divided for us practically by the language employed in the first verse of chapters 34, 35, and 36. This leaves us with but the introductory address to the friends and Job (chapters 32 and 33: 1–7), to be separated from his first main argument (chap. 33: 8–33), and we have the five divisions of his address.

(1) The emptiness and failure of the controversy (chaps. 32—33: 7).

(2) God's purpose in chastening (chap. 33: 8–33).

(3) His character vindicated (chap. 34).

(4) His testing of men (chap. 35).

(5) His working among men and in nature (chaps. 36, 37).

As already noticed, there is a manifest progress throughout the address, and well defined links with what precedes and follows.

1.—*The emptiness and the failure of the controversy* (chaps. 32–33: 7).

This portion is chiefly introductory. We have first an explanatory prelude in prose, introducing Elihu — somewhat similar to the opening and closing chapters of the book. This is followed by a courteous explanation of his silence thus far, and a scathing rebuke of the friends for their failure. He, however, is full of matter, and must speak with no uncertain sound for the honor of his Maker. He closes his exordium in words of conciliating kindness to Job, inviting any response he may have to give. The whole forms an admirable opening, in which modesty, indignation, earnestness and graciousness are blended together.

(1) Explanatory introduction (vers. 1–5).
(2) Reasons for his silence (vers. 6–10).
(3) The failure of the friends (vers. 11–13).
(4) He must speak (vers. 14–22).
(5) The daysman (chap. 33 : 1–7).

(1) This is the first mention we have of Elihu. He is not spoken of in the visit of the friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, in chap. 2 : 11–13. While no direct statement to that effect is made, it is not improbable that persons may have come and gone during the controversy. No time limit is set, and there may have been periods of silence between the addresses. Be that as it may, Elihu had been an interested listener throughout, and was therefore in a position to speak when the others had become silent.

There is much appropriateness in the significance of his name—"My God is He." He does not speak for himself, but for God. In this way he is typical of our Lord, whose one object was to speak for the Father: "I have declared unto them Thy name" (John 17: 26).

He was the son of Barachel, "May God bless," suggesting, may we not say, that the blessing or favor of God is given to the one who stands for Him alone: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17). As *son* of Barachel, we have a suggestion of the relationship between our Lord and the Father—"The Son of the Blessed." He was ever that; therefore, when He came into the world He could say, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Apart however from this full thought, we may gather that God's blessing produces and ever accompanies faithfulness to Him.

The family names are next given, "the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram." Buz was one of the sons of Nahor, and therefore connected with Abraham. Ram has been supposed to be abbreviated from Aram, marking the country where the family abode. Elihu therefore belonged to a well-known family and locality. But when we consider the significance of these names, we find a striking accord with what we have already seen. Buzi—"the despised;" Ram, "the exalted." We know of whom both these are true: "He is despised and rejected of men;" "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (Isa. 53: 3; 52: 13). Thus we have illustrative confirmation of Elihu's typical place and work. We come now to the address.

The three friends having been silenced, and Job being left entrenched in his self-righteousness, Elihu's anger is doubly stirred—against Job for failing to glorify God by acknowledging His righteousness, and against the friends for stubbornly maintaining their accusations while unable to give a single proof. Elihu's attitude is perfectly explained in these few words. The remaining verses explain his courtesy in remaining silent, because of his youth and their age.

(2) He explains this silence now, in courteous words. However, it is not mere age which gives wisdom, but the spirit which comes from God—the breathing of God, which has made mortal man different from the beasts. So he, if he speak the wisdom of God, is entitled to be heard.

(3) He had carefully attended to all they had said, and not one of them had convinced Job, or satisfactorily answered him. We need only look back at the addresses of Eliphaz, beginning in such an elevated, dignified way, and ending in most brutal charges; at the similar, though not so harsh, words of Bildad; and at the vehement declarations of Zophar, to see how fully Elihu was justified in in his statements. Truly he could add, they had no right to claim *they* had found out wisdom. It was God, he declares, not man, who had thrust Job down, and made him realize his helplessness.

(4) Job has had no controversy with *him*, and he will not descend into the arena of the others, to strive with ineffectual words. Their present silence shows how completely vanquished they were. He now will speak—even he. For he is full, and must

give utterance to the spirit that stirs within him, which is like new wine seeking a vent. He is constrained; necessity is laid upon him. How different is this from the scholarly, deliberate arguments to which Job had thus far been compelled to listen, or from a vehemence which had little of wisdom or justice in it. We are reminded of the apostle's word "Necessity is laid upon me" (1 Cor. 9: 16).

Nor will he use flattering words. He has no respect of persons, and this qualifies him to be the spokesman for God. All is most excellent. There is a tone of authority—"and not as the scribes"—that tells of one who knows whereof he speaks.

(5) Lastly, he turns to Job, not in the anger which will find a place later, but calmly and graciously. He entreats Job to listen to him, for all will be gone into fairly. His wisdom comes, not from human knowledge or experience merely, but is from the Almighty. Job is free to answer him if he does not accept his statements, for he, as well as Elihu, has a link with God. This seems to be the thought of the first part of the 6th verse. It reminds Job that God makes known His mind in a gentle way, that Job himself may learn that mind. And yet it reminds us of a divine authority which knew whereof he spoke. Then Elihu was a man, too, so Job need not be terrified. He could say, as Peter, "I myself also am a man" (Acts 10: 26).

Let us, then, not despise the youth of Elihu, but listen to the sober lessons he will give us. We may look for better things than the accusations and reasonings of man, or the wail of the afflicted.

2.—*The purpose of God in chastening* (chap. 33: 8–33).

Having cleared the way, in his introductory address to the friends and to Job, Elihu plunges at once into the heart of the matter. We note a marked change in the manner of his treatment of the subject from the method of the three friends. There is an evident expectation of *results*. He does not propose to let such momentous questions as had been raised remain in the chaotic condition they now were, when all the contestants had fought to a standstill, and none were convinced. His addresses therefore are not a declamatory statement of his own principles, but an appeal to Job's conscience and reason. There is a marked absence of the abusive and insulting manner of the friends, while there is a most faithful and unsparing uncovering of Job's faults, without stirring up opposition.

Underlying all that was said by the friends was a wretched suspicion, growing into a certainty, that Job is a hypocrite. For this they had not the slightest proof, but everything to the contrary. They were forced to it by their theory, and for the sake of that they trample under foot all natural and gracious affection. Nothing wounds an upright and affectionate man as unfounded suspicions and charges growing out of this. From all this Elihu is entirely free. He takes Job as he knows him and as he finds him. He entertains no suspicions, makes no unfounded charges. Much indeed he has to say, but Job's own words are his

evidence. Evil there is, but it is not evil acts, but pride, self-will, doubt as to God—things which can be brought home to Job's conscience.

As we have therefore admitted, there is a great measure of truth in what the friends have said, but it has been onesided truth, distorted and vitiated by a wrong principle—that all suffering is for wickedness, and is a proof that every afflicted man is only a sinner found out. The contrast in Elihu will appear as we examine his address. It has been contended that he repeats, in a feebler way, the statements of Eliphaz; but as we examine the points of similarity, this will be abundantly disproved.

This much may also be said: that the long and futile controversy had prepared Job to listen to Elihu, as he probably would not at the first. He had "talked himself out," had poured out his lamentations, resented his friends' charges, declared his own uprightness, and withal had manifested his faith in God, while most gravely failing to see His character. All this had been brought out by the addresses of the friends, and to that extent they served a useful purpose. It may be well to add here that Elihu himself does not bring everything to a full conclusion. That is left to Jehovah Himself.

From its salient features, the present address may be divided into four parts:

(1) Job's charge against God's justice refuted (vers. 8–13).

(2) God's twofold dealing with men, and its object (vers. 14–22).

(3) His righteousness revealed, and man's recovery (vers. 23–30).

(4) Job tested by these words (vers. 31–33).

(1) Elihu's chief concern throughout is the vindication of God's character from the aspersions cast upon it by Job. He is not so much occupied with what Job had done or what he was—although entertaining no unworthy suspicions—but Job had uttered sentiments in his own hearing which he could not allow to pass unreproved. This is as it should be. God must ever be first, His honor the chief concern of those who know Him. In this Job had sadly failed.

Elihu refers to many of Job's own statements in proof of the dishonor done to God. Some of these he quotes exactly; for others he gives the substance of much that Job had said. He quotes him as saying, "I am clean, without transgression; I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me"(ver. 9). Compare such statements as these: "Thou knowest that I am not wicked" (ch. 10: 7); "Not for any injustice in my hands; also my prayer is pure" (ch. 16: 17); "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart will not reproach me so long as I live" (ch. 27: 5, 6).

It may be said that Job was simply refuting the charges of wickedness brought by the friends; but he was also accusing God of dealing unfairly with him, in punishing an innocent man.

This is manifest in the next quotations: "Behold, He findeth occasions (or, malicious things) against

me, He counteth me for His enemy" (ch. 33: 10). So he had declared, "These things hast Thou hid in thy heart . . . Thou humblest me as a fierce lion . . . changes and war are against me" (ch. 10: 13–17). "Wherefore hidest Thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?" (ch. 13: 24; so also ch. 19: 11). Thus the insult against divine majesty becomes glaring—Job is pure, but God treats him as impure! "He putteth my feet in the stocks; He marketh all my paths" (ch. 33: 11). This is a verbal quotation—"Thou putteth my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths" (ch. 13: 27).

So Elihu does not misrepresent Job, nor catch at a random expression. Indeed, the chief sorrow of the patriarch was he seemed to be losing that beneficent Being in whom he once delighted. It will not do to say that in spite of these doubts Job also admitted God's power and knowledge; that he also expressed his confidence in Him and a desire to plead his cause before Him. But how could this be harmonized with such statements as those quoted by Elihu? Such charges must be met, and Job convinced of their falsity, or he could never have peace in his own soul, and a dark blot would rest upon God's honor.

How then will Elihu answer? Will he imitate the friends by going into elaborate statements? Will he apologize for the apparent discrepancy in God's ways, and seek to explain it away? No; in one brief sentence he sets aside all human reasonings—"God is greater than man." In other words, God is God. If we are to reason, let it not be from the lesser to the greater, but from the greater to

the less. Let us say, How could the Almighty, all-perfect Being commit an unrighteous act? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18: 25). So Paul answers to one who would question the righteousness of God: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9: 20). And a Greater than Paul rested in the absolute infallibility of God: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11: 26).

So long as a soul raises a question against the character of God, he is in no state to have his difficulties met. Let the potsherds of the earth strive one with another; God will not stoop to such a conflict. "Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters" (ver. 13). This is the general and evident meaning of the passage. Slight changes are made in the translation—"God is too exalted for man"; He is too exalted to enter into controversy with man (*Enosh*, frail man). Ver. 13 is rendered, "Why hast thou contended with Him that He answereth not concerning all His doings?"—that is, Why is Job complaining at not receiving full replies to all his questionings? The soul must find its rest in *God*, not in our reasonings. "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11: 33).

(2) But though infinitely above man, and beyond his comprehension, God is not indifferent to His frail creatures, nor arbitrary in His dealings with them. When once the soul is subject to God, and has taken its true place, He can unfold His ways to it. As soon as it is ready to admit that God has

some wise purpose in view, He will show that affliction is but one of the methods of God's dealings with men, and that it has a definite object. This, Elihu now proceeds to explain. So long as Job accuses, he gets no answer; let him submit and God will make all plain.

There are two methods of the divine dealing of which Elihu speaks: the one is God instructing by dreams; the other, by affliction. These are closely connected, and may therefore be spoken of together.

In the days of the patriarchs, we may say that there was no revelation of God save that imparted to the individual. God thus made known His mind to Noah, to Abraham, and even to those who were largely ignorant of Him, as Abimelech and Laban (Gen. 20: 3, etc.; 31: 24). A dream or vision was often employed, but it was a divine revelation. Eliphaz refers to such a communication, in beautiful language, but not so definitely as Elihu does here (see ch. 4: 12–21).

Elihu makes it plain that God thus speaks to man. When the light of nature is withdrawn, when all is silent, He speaks in "a still small voice" and makes known His mind. Thus instruction is sealed upon the heart of man. His object is to correct wrong thoughts and actions, to withdraw man from "mischief," or his purpose, and to hide pride from man (*geber*, the hero or mighty man). This goes deeper than action, for pride lurks in the heart, and God would hide it from man—hinder its control over him. "Keep back also thy servant from presumptuous sins" (Ps. 19: 13). Thus man is kept

back from destruction. He bows to the correction of God's truth, and is thus spared from the smiting of the rod, or of the sword.

The same truth is in even fuller force now, for we need not a revelation by dreams and visions, but have it in the written word of God. He who spake in many ways (dreams among the rest) has now given us the full revelation of Himself in His Son, and this revelation—the entire word of God—we have in the Scriptures. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3: 16).

It is by this Word that God now speaks to men, to withdraw them from their purpose, to deliver His own from the snare of pride. Thus our Lord would have deterred Peter from his course of self-confidence. Had he hearkened to the word, he would have been spared the shameful experience of his failure (Luke 22: 31–34).

Alas, we must say that though God speaks thus once, yea twice, "yet man perceiveth it not."

But God has another way of speaking to men. If they do not hearken to His *word*, He may send them His *rod*. In enlarging upon this, Elihu practically describes the case of Job. Sore chastening pains come upon him, and his bones seem to wither in mortal strife. "My bones are pierced in me, and my sinews take no rest" (ch. 30: 17). He is brought so low that he abhors even the food which would sustain his life. "The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat." "My soul is weary of my life" (chs. 6: 7; 10: 1). His flesh is

wasted away, and his bones look and stare upon him. "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh" (ch. 19: 20). He is at the last of life, drawing near to the grave, or the more dreadful "pit of destruction." I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living" (ch. 30: 23).

Elihu does not in so many words say that Job has refused to hearken to God's admonitions, nor does he say he is describing his case exactly. He speaks of God's method of dealing with men. Has it no voice for Job? Can he not at least see that God is speaking in the affliction and that He has something to say?

(3) If man is to profit by this chastening of God, he must understand its purpose and for this is needed one who can explain it. The word for "messenger" is "angel," and this suggests a supernatural revealer of the mind of God. This we find frequently throughout the Old Testament, where the "angel" made known the will of God (see Judges 2: 1; 13: 3, etc.). The "angel of Jehovah" is indeed His representative, so completely so as to be referred to as Jehovah Himself ("The angel of His presence," Isa. 63: 9, etc.). Here we have a suggestion of the Mediator, and this is accentuated by the next word, "an Interpreter," or "Mediator" (see Gen. 42: 23; 2 Chron. 32: 21)—one who, as an ambassador, is sent to make known the mind of God. Nor will an ordinary messenger suffice; it must be "one of a thousand"—a phrase reminding us of "the chiefest among ten thousand" (Song 5: 10).

Further than this Elihu could not go. He must

let the veil remain until "The only begotten Son" should come, to declare God perfectly. But can we refuse the typical suggestion of Elihu's words?*

For who, after all, has or can explain God's ways, save Him who has "brought life and immortality to light?" By Him "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

"To show unto man his uprightness." *Whose* uprightness? Some would say *man's; i.e.*, the interpreter would show man how to act in order to please God. Others would define this uprightness as penitence and confession; others, faith. Unquestionably man must be brought low if God is to exalt him. But does not an interpreter suggest one who reveals God? Was not Job's difficulty that he did not understand God's uprightness in His dealings with him? And was not the object of Elihu to make this uprightness plain—to produce self-judgment? Confidence in the uprightness of God is the foundation of an upright walk. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Ps. 119: 75).

It is therefore the uprightness or righteousness of God that is declared; and here again we find the fuller light of the New Testament furnishing us with suited language: "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and

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* "The Jewish prayers show that the Interpreter was always identified in their minds with the exalted Redeemer of Israel; thus, 'Raise up for us the righteous Interpreter; say, I have found a ransom.' The whole passage is quoted at the sacrifice, still offered in many countries of Europe, on the eve of the great Day of Atonement." —*Canon Cook, in Speakers' Commentary.*

the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 26). This indeed goes further than a declaration of God's uprightness in His *ways;* it shows us His essential attribute of justice displayed in the Cross of Christ, where justice has indeed found the suited ransom.

In Elihu's words we find a beautiful expression of the evangel of God—"Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom;" or, in the language of the New Testament—"having obtained (Gk., *found*) eternal redemption" (Heb. 9: 12).

Thus a freshness better than that of youth is given—as Naaman furnishes an example. "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (2 Ki. 5: 14). It is a new birth, by the incorruptible seed of the word of God.

Now we see the blessed results of this work of the Interpreter in the ransomed man. He can now pray with confidence, and rejoice in God's favor, beholding His face with joy. He has found a righteousness—not of his own goodness but of Another —"the righteousness which is of God by faith." Doubtless this includes the recognition of faithfulness in a child of God—as in Job's case; but the principle carries us much further.

As he is able now to speak to God in prayer, and to behold His face with joy, so the ransomed soul can speak to his fellows. "He looketh upon men," rather, "He *singeth* to men." It is part of the new song he has learned, which many shall hear, and be turned to the Lord. "I had sinned and perverted what was right"—Job will soon acknowl-

edge his sin in perverting, misunderstanding, the righteous character of God. So the sinner can look back to the time when he was "a blasphemer and injurious." But this iniquity has not been requited to the once guilty one. "It was not recompensed to me"—for so should the last clause of verse 27 read. "He hath delivered my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall see the light," ver. 28.

This, declares Elihu, is the secret of God's ways; time and time again it has been seen in the case of the sinner brought low into God's presence by the holy conviction of His word, and the sense of His hand upon him: so also in the case of the saint, who can say, "It is good for me that I was afflicted."

(4) And now, Job, what have you to say to all this? Elihu desires to bring out Job's true condition—he would not justify his *wrong*, but treat him with all fairness. He pauses for a reply: Job is not to be coerced, but does he not agree with what has been said? May we not interpret his silence as an acknowledgment of the truth of what we have been dwelling upon?

3. *God's Character Vindicated* (chap. 34).

Having paused for Job's reply, Elihu now continues his plea. The main theme of the present chapter is the vindication of God's character from the aspersions of Job. Impliedly, if not in so many words, Job had charged God with injustice. This is the main concern with Elihu. He is not taken up with reasonings as to heinous crimes attri-

buted to Job by the friends; he indulges in no surmisings, insinuations or vituperations. His appeal is to man's reason; he states his facts, draws attention to the necessary recognition of God's character, which he vindicates from several points of view, and concludes this portion with the deliberate, yet gracious exhortation that Job should take the place of the lowly learner, in order that he may profit by his chastening. Having failed thus far to take such a place, there is nothing left but that Job should be further tried until he has learned his lesson. It is a most temperate and admirable treatment of his subject, and resembles the method of the friends only outwardly, if at all. The appeal to reason, coupled with the self-evident truth as to the nature of God, leads to the weighty conclusion that *Job* is the wrongdoer, not God. And this wrong is proven from the lips of the sufferer and from his attitude toward God.

We may divide the address into four main parts, the third of these being again subdivided, as indicated by its subjects.

(1) The appeal to wise men (vers. 1–4).
(2) Job's charge of injustice against God (vers. 5–9).
(3) The charge refuted (vers. 10–30).
(4) Job needs further testing (vers. 31–37).

(1) Elihu is not addressing the three friends as 'wise men," nor any special individuals, apparently. It has been thought that he is speaking to the audience that had gathered round to listen to the controversy, which may be true, but the ex-

pression seems to be a general appeal to the judgment of the wise everywhere and for all time. Elihu is dealing with principles of universal application, the immediate occasion for their utterance being the examination of Job's attitude.

Quoting Job's own words (chap. 12: 11), which seem to be in the form of a proverb, he reminds his hearers that the ear is the avenue for the reception and testing of words as the mouth is for food. Let them therefore accompany him in his search into the truth or falsity of Job's charges. Thus our Lord appealed to His hearers, "Why of your own selves judge ye not that which is right?" and the apostle says, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say."

(2) As already noticed, Elihu deals fairly with Job's statements. He either quotes his words, or gives their substance, or draws manifest conclusions from them. Job had time and again declared he was righteous, or guiltless (so chap. 10: 7). This is the whole burden of his complaint against God. He had declared that God had taken away his judgment (chap. 27: 2), and that, being innocent, if he confessed sin he would be a liar; that his wound is incurable, in spite of his being without transgression (chaps. 23: 2; 30: 23, etc.).

Elihu likens such statements to the conduct of the wicked, into whose company Job, by his assertions, was putting himself. He was drinking up scorning like water (see ch. 15: 16). For surely if we lose faith in God's righteousness, what is left? This is walking "in the counsel of the ungodly," far more dangerous than outward forms of evil.

The effect of such teaching is that there is no profit in seeking to please God, or have fellowship with Him. What a monstrous charge to fall from the lips of one who was a child of God! We can be thankful that Job's faith did not fail in spite of this cloud of unbelief; but Elihu in faithfulness must put the point of the knife upon the festering sore, more serious than his bodily ailments. How differently spoke our blessed Lord in His path of loneliness: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places" (Ps. 16: 6); and who, in His darkest hour, justifies God's ways, saying, "But Thou art holy" (Ps. 22: 3).

(3) Elihu now refutes these implied and direct charges against God. He will vindicate His character, and while appealing to wisdom, he gives no uncertain sound, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3: 4). He goes into the case with fulness, and we may note the various parts of his refutation. God is righteous:

(*a*) Because He is God (vers. 10–12).
(*b*) Because of His beneficent care (vers. 13–15).
(*c*) Because of His greatness (vers. 16–20).
(*d*) Because of His omniscience (vers. 21–25).
(*e*) Because of His judgment (vers. 26–30).

(*a*) The very fact that God is, denies that He is unrighteous. The absolutely Perfect One could not think or do evil. So James declares, "God cannot be tempted with evil" (ch. 1: 13). Let us mark well this method of reasoning. It turns from all second causes, from the difficult problems and dark enigmas in the world to Him who is light.

It finds its rest in *God;* blessed rest. "Far be it from *God* to do evil." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1: 5). The Almighty—the Omnipotent—can do everything, but "He cannot lie." "He cannot deny Himself." This insures perfect, even justice in His dealings with men; He will recompense man's own work to him, and He will cause him to find the results of his own ways. This does not mean that Job's friends are in the right as to their charges, but that God is dealing in absolute justice with Job, causing him to learn his needed lessons. How could God act wickedly or pervert the right? He would not *be* God if this were possible. The answer is most convincing.

(*b*) Let Job look at God's providential care over His creation. It is His own, and not something committed to Him by another. Suppose, instead of remembering the need of His dependent creation, He were to turn His heart only to Himself. He is absolutely self-sufficient. He needs nothing from without. In all the past of eternity, God—Father, Son and Spirit—found sufficient delight in the Divine circle. Suppose, says Elihu, He were to turn back into that Divine Sufficiency, and set His heart—not upon *man*, as in our version, but upon *Himself*—what would become of His creation? "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust" (ver. 15). "Thou takest away their breath, they die" (Ps. 104: 29). "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." So the apostle Peter tells the saints in the midst of suffering to "commit the keeping of their souls unto Him in well-doing, as unto a faith-

ful Creator" (1 Pet. 4 : 19). How good it is to remember that the One who "upholdeth all things by the word of His power," is also our Saviour, Lord and Friend.

(*c*) In this portion Elihu reminds Job of the dignity and greatness of God. If it is wrong to question the uprightness of a king, to call him Belial, who will dare to charge the All-just with evil? He looks upon princes and paupers alike, and all are the work of His hands. Their life hangs upon His will, in a moment He can cut them off—will we think of such an One as fickle, uncertain or unfair? The heathen indeed represented thus their deities, but for those who know the true God, how impossible it is to have such thoughts.

(*d*) Similarly, He is Judge—the all-seeing One, from whom no secret can be hid. Of Him the psalmist wrote, "Thou hast searched me and known me" (Ps. 139). His eye is upon every step of man; evil cannot hide itself from Him. He does not need to study a man's ways, but at a glance, as it were, knows him and enters into judgment with him. (Such is the meaning of ver. 23, rather than that of our version.) Similarly, in ver. 24, there is no need for "investigation" to determine the overthrow of evil men. He seeth through their works and brings upon them their crushing doom. How can we think of such an One, whose all-seeing eye pierces to the innermost recesses of the heart, being Himself in need of judgment?

(*e*) Lastly, Elihu with few words reminds his hearers of God's actual judgments; He smites evildoers who depart from Him; He remembers the

cause of the poor and needy. So too, if He acquit, give quietness, who can condemn? "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8: 33, 34). If He hides His face, who can look upon Him, whether He deal thus with a simple individual, or with mankind in general? He puts down evil men that the people be not ensnared by them.

Thus Elihu rapidly covers the ground. He does not judge according to the sight of his eyes, but drawing all his thoughts from God whom he knows, makes clear to every upright mind the correctness of his conclusions.

(4) This brings us to the conclusion of this part of his address. If Job has thus unfairly charged God, he has a most important lesson to learn. What is fitting for one in his position?—Bold assertion of self-righteousness, and accusations of God, or the humble acknowledgment of his wrong in harboring such thoughts?—with the prayer, "That which I see not, teach Thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more" (ver. 32).

Had Job done this? A glance at the controversy and at Job's monologue shows the contrary. Job had found fault with God's judgments because they were not according to his shortsighted expectations. It was Job therefore who was choosing his own affliction, not Elihu, who longs to have him declare it, and clear himself. He appeals to the men of understanding again. Will not all unite with him in saying, "Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words are without wisdom." Can *we* not fully agree with this conclusion?

Thus faithfully Elihu expresses the desire that

Job may be tested to the end, until his answers like evil men be judged by him. He has been withstanding God, and boldly defied Him.

Elihu's desire is to be granted, and Job will, ere long, repudiate his false charges of God as completely as Elihu does here.

4. *God's Testing of Man* (chap. 35).

In the previous chapter Elihu had devoted himself chiefly to vindicating God's character, as seen in His beneficent government, as well as in the self-evident fact that the Source of all right, justice and government, must Himself be the embodiment of what we partly see even in this fallen creation. The present chapter is so intimately connected with this that it has been taken as a part of the same division. But from the fact that there is evidently a fresh beginning in ver. 1, as well as from the contents, it seems more fitting to give it a separate place. As the *fourth* portion of Elihu's address it is fittingly a test of man, which is the subject, rather than a vindication of God, as in the previous chapter. This test, however, is largely along the same lines as the previous vindication of God. And how true it is that what manifests His character, in its perfection, discloses the nature and ways of man as he is.

The chapter may be divided into three portions:

(1) God's transcendent greatness (vers. 1–8).

(2) Why the cry of the oppressed is not answered (vers. 9–13).

(3) A call to trust Him (vers. 14–16).

We notice again the gracious tone of Elihu. He is appealing to Job's reason and conscience, seeking to win him from his hard and sinful thoughts of God to simple trust in One who may hide Himself in the darkness, but who *must* be good in all He does. Already we have seen flashes of this in Job, but he must yet be brought to judge everything inconsistent with the noble words he uttered at the beginning: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

(1) Quoting again Job's thoughts, if not his exact words, and drawing the proper conclusion from them, Elihu points out the monstrous deduction—"My righteousness is more than God's." For had not Job brought himself to just such a conclusion? "I have not sinned to deserve such treatment; my life is blameless before man and God; there is no reason for His afflicting except for glaring transgressions, therefore He is unjust!" Well it is for us to face our conclusions, and learn the folly of our reasonings.

The following verses, 2, 3, seem to be a repetition, with enlargement of what had been previously said in chap. 34 : 9. Job had declared that his claim was more righteous than God's, because (ver. 3) God was utterly indifferent to whatever he did. There was no advantage in righteousness any more than in sin! Imagine an upright, God-fearing man bringing himself to such a conclusion! It leads to, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Elihu's reply is not what we might have expected. He does not apparently contradict Job's conclusion; indeed he takes his thought, but uses it to vindicate God's character. "You say, O Job —and your companions are but little better in their reasonings—that your conduct cannot be of any value, whether it be good or bad, for God is indifferent to it either way. Yes, God *is* infinitely above you, and your conduct cannot directly interfere with Him. Why then have you charged Him with unfairness and arbitrary selfishness in afflicting you?" According to Job's reasoning, God was unaffected by what man did, was not injured by his sin, nor profited by his righteousness. Elihu therefore asks, "How is it that you say He does pay attention to man, and so much so that He most unrighteously afflicts you?" Here is manifest contradiction on Job's part.

Elihu, as usual with him, dwells upon God's side. He does not for the moment speak of His relations with man, or His intimate care and divine interest in man's walk. He would have Job look up into those very heavens which he thought were against him, and ponder the character of One who is infinitely perfect, unaffected by the puny activities of men on earth, who are as grasshoppers in His sight. How could such an One, infinitely holy, divinely sufficient unto Himself, act unjustly toward one whose conduct may and does affect himself and his fellow-men, but cannot penetrate those serene heights? This is but one side of the truth—a side already seen in measure by both Job (chap. 7: 20) and Eliphaz (chap. 22: 2, etc.).

(2) Having shown that his own view of God's independence of man was a reply to his accusations, Elihu at once proceeds to show that there *is* a divine concern in man's ways. God slumbereth not. He sees and hears. It grieves Him at His heart when men sin. His infinite perfections are outraged by evil, and it is for this reason that He does not, cannot in faithfulness, answer the cry of the oppressed for relief. Elihu is not speaking directly of Job, but of all afflicted ones, including him. There is a reason why they do not get relief from the Almighty.

And this reason is that, occupied with their own misery, seeking relief only for their own sake, they have no thought of God's will or of His glory. They do not ask, Where is God my Maker? What can I learn of Him in these things? And is not this well-nigh universal? Where do we find men turning to God in their affliction? The hungry want bread, but they do not want God. Give them bread, and they are quite content to go on in perfect ignorance of Him. "Ye seek Me . . . because ye did eat of the loaves, and are filled. Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life . . . And *this* is life eternal, that they might know Thee." Are men grateful to God for His blessings; do they seek after Him for what *He is?*

And yet are we not immeasurably above the beasts? God teaches us more than they can know. Yes, He giveth songs in the night of trial. Indifference to all this is the heart-breaking fact that, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as

God, neither were thankful." Is it any wonder, then, that God must let poor man feel the weight of his sufferings, if perchance he would seek after the only One who can, not only give relief, but prove a satisfying portion?

Pride, vanity, self-will, are what turn the heavens into brass. The Lord is nigh to them of a broken heart. This is the burden of the "Lord's prayer"—God's glory comes first. If men ignore that, they need not be surprised that their prayer for daily bread seems to be ignored.

Elihu is here dealing with principles, and it need hardly be added that he is only explaining God's silence when men cry, and not alluding to His kindness and care of His creatures. "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Might not Job learn the needed lesson if he would but give heed? He had been the recipient of abundant mercies from God; must there not be a reason for His apparent silence now?

(3) There has been some difference as to the meaning of ver. 14—some holding it as a quotation of Job, as though Elihu would say, "If God does not hear pride, much less will He hear thee, when thou sayest thou seest Him not, the cause lieth all before Him, and yet thou art obliged to wait in vain upon Him." This is quite in accord with the previous words of Elihu; but our version, which turns them into an exhortation, makes an appropriate conclusion: "Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him, therefore trust thou in Him." Do not think God has forgotten; be patient; learn the lesson He would

teach thee. How admirable and scriptural is this advice—exactly what Job needed. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Elihu puts the other side also before Job. He is not to imagine that because God does not smite, He does not know. He fully sees all man's presumption. This is the probable meaning of ver. 15, which is so obscure in our version. "Extremity" has been rendered as "wide-spread iniquity," well answering to "presumption," or "sullenness." The conclusion is, "God is not mocked." Let not men despise His patience.

Therefore Job has opened his mouth in vain; he has multiplied his words without knowledge. This is what God will later on bring home to his conscience in that terrible introductory question: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" Thus Job is being prepared to listen to that Voice. Truly, Elihu is answering to his desire for a daysman, and Job's silence may well be taken as a token of beginning conviction.

5. *Elihu's closing Address—God's workings among Men and in Nature* (chaps. 36, 37).

We come now to the close of Elihu's remarkable dealings with Job. He still has much to say, and still the theme is the same—he will speak for God. This supreme object to vindicate God from the aspersions of Job—in which the friends had failed so utterly—is the great characteristic of Elihu's

address, and gives us the key to what he says. He acts as a mediator, an interpreter for men, a revealer of God. The typical resemblance to our Lord's work is manifest.

This closing part begins with a summing up along the lines already followed, but concludes with a description of the workings of God in nature, which for grandeur is incomparable. If in the beginning he speaks in simple didactic manner, addressing the judgment and the conscience, the close is so vivid that it has been well thought to be a description of an actual storm whose approach heralded the presence of God—a most fitting prelude to Jehovah's word from the whirlwind.

The address therefore may be divided into two parts, each subdivided according to the indicated progress of thought.

1. God's dealings among men (chap. 36 : 1–21).
2. His ways in Nature (chaps. 36: 22—37: 24).

Though the division indicated is clear, there is a close connection between the two parts of the address, marking its unity.

1. We may at once give the outline of the first part, in which the ways of God with men are dwelt upon.

(1) Introductory (vers. 1–4).
(2) God's care over the righteous (vers. 5–7).
(3) The object of affliction (vers. 8–15).
(4) The application to Job (vers. 16–18).
(5) Exhortations (vers. 19–21).

(1) There is no invitation for Job to speak at the

close of the previous part of the address; but Elihu presses on toward the close. Job is asked to permit him yet to speak for God; he will bring near the knowledge of Him who dwelleth afar. His constant aim is to vindicate Him, and in doing so, he will speak with a knowledge that is "perfect." This is no proud boast of personal attainment, but the solemn consciousness that he is speaking for God.

(2) In one word he sweeps away the unholy suspicions which had been harbored by Job—"God is great, and despiseth not any." Infinite in power as He is, He looks with compassion upon the feeblest of His creatures. There are two infinities in which He is equally seen—the infinitely great, and the infinitely small. How comforting is the truth, "He despiseth not any!" His greatness is never the occasion for scorn. His wisdom is infinitely powerful, but never exerted against feebleness. He does not ignore sin—will not, eventually, preserve the life of the ungodly; but we may be sure that He deals in perfect righteousness in all the afflictions He permits. The righteous are His special care; He withdraweth not His eyes from them. They are as secure as though they were kings, they will be established and exalted. Here Job's questionings are answered. As a righteous man, he need not fear; he is secure, and will be established and exalted in due time. This his own faith had seen through the darkness that closed about him; here it is stated once for all.

(3) Why then affliction? These "righteous" who are the objects of God's care, are at times "bound

in fetters, holden in cords of affliction." Is it a contradiction of what Elihu had just said? To Job it had been, because he failed to see in his own heart possibilities of evil, a pride which was as real a transgression as the flagrant evils falsely charged by the friends upon Job. God's object was to lay bare to man the hidden evil of his heart, to open his ear to His warnings and to turn him from pride. If they bow to this, sooner or later will their sufferings pass—even in this life: if not, they must be chastened even to the end, and be smitten as by a speeding arrow from His hand.

Naturally Elihu cannot go beyond the present life. The veil that hung between the present and the future had not been lifted. With the added light we now have, we can speak of "our light affliction which is but for a moment," though it endure for a lifetime. The suffering for righteousness' sake, for Christ, instead of being a cloud and darkness, is the "spirit of glory and of God" (1 Pet. 4: 14). Of this, necessarily, Elihu could not speak. He points out the great principles of present affliction: the refusal of the hypocrite, who nurses his wrath instead of humbly crying to God for mercy, only emphasizes this. The despiser shall meet his doom with all the unclean, but God will save the humble sufferer, "in" and indeed "by" his affliction. It "worketh out" blessing for him.

(4) This principle is applied to Job's case. God would have thus dealt with him, restoring to prosperity, as He soon will. But Job had hindered this by his unholy charges against God. This was "the judgment of the wicked" (ver. 17)—their manner

of charging God—and he need not be surprised that judgment had laid hold on him. This has been rendered, "Judging and judgment lay hold on one another," but the thought is similar. If one judges God, it is closely linked with judgment upon himself. Ver. 18 has been variously explained. Our own version gives a very connected meaning, "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Another rendering refers the "wrath" to Job—"Let not anger entice thee to scorning, and let not the greatness of the ransom mislead thee." The "ransom" is here taken as humility, the price of his deliverance. But this seems strained. The thought that the greatness of the ransom must not close Job's eyes to the truth of God's goodness, seems also out of place. On the whole, the solemn warning of our version seems most suitable to the connection. Job is warned that persistence in proud charging of God can only result in one way—death. It is a question of the present life. Job is warned against "the sin unto death" (1 Jno. 5:16), though not of course with the full light of the New Testament. There is evidently a chastening of the people of God that goes on to death, because of their failure to judge themselves. "For this cause . . . many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30). A persistent refusal on Job's part to humble himself might have resulted in this.

(5) The reading of ver. 19 is also disputed. Our version, followed by others, links it closely with what precedes, the price of a great ransom: "Will He esteem thy riches?" etc. Delitzsch links it rather

with what follows: "Shall thy crying place thee beyond distress, and all the efforts of strength?" This gives a consistent meaning, for Job had been crying aloud to the limit of his strength, but without help. He had longed for the night of death to come upon him, as it eventually does upon all the nations of the earth. Let him take heed, and rather bow to affliction than choose the path of pride.

2. The remainder of the address is devoted to a description of some of God's ways in nature, almost exclusively indeed with the meteorological or heavenly sphere. This accords both with what precedes and what follows, especially the latter, as has been already noted. The subdivisions follow:

(1) God's greatness in His works, proving His uprightness (ch. 36: 22–25),
(2) As seen in the clouds and rain (vers. 26–29).
(3) Signs of His presence (vers. 30–33).
(4) Puny man in the tornado (ch. 37: 1–5).
(5) His hand in winter upon man (vers. 6–10).
(6) Storms and their varied effect (vers. 11–16).
(7) The conclusion (vers. 17–24).

Whether viewed as poetic or didactic literature, we have in this close of Elihu's address an example of sublime diction and holy sentiment that commands our wonder and our worship. Continuing his thought, in the previous portion, of God's uprightness, he rises rapidly into the heavens and there views Him in the clouds, the rain, the lightning and the storm. The wisdom and beneficence of God are seen in these, and then as though

heralding the immediate approach of the Almighty, he seems to stand trembling in presence of the great storm where God rides "upon the wings of the wind." All nature is hushed in sympathy with his unknown dread; the very cattle, startled and fearful, await the coming of the storm. The very language, with its broken, exclamatory utterances, its humility and godly fear, is in beautiful accord with the whole theme. In all we see the almighty power and majesty of God, and man's feebleness. Yet all is for purposes of wise government in mercy and blessing. Let Job ponder it all: is *he* like God? Fittingly Elihu closes with the basic tone of his theme—the absolute all-sufficiency of God and His abhorrence of the pride of man.

Let us look a little at the details.

(1) The transition from the previous verses to what is to come is very beautiful. In these first three subdivisions we begin with "Behold" (vers. 22, 26, 30). Who is a great God like unto Him? Who teacheth like Him, both in the mind of man and in nature? Can we charge such an One with evil? Rather let us magnify His works—the theme of men in their song. Though looking upon it from afar, and but feebly apprehending it, all nations, from the most cultured to the untutored savage, have gazed in wonder and admiration upon the scene.

(2) Again His greatness and His eternity are declared, voiced in the ever repeated recurrence of mist and cloud, rain and storm. From the great reservoir of waters—whether above or below the firmament—He causes the rain to distil in gentle

and abundant showers upon men. Could modern science state more exactly the origin of the rain? Or atheistic poetry so celebrate its beauty?

> "I am the daughter
> Of the sky and water."

But both science and poetry leave God out, and when men see Him not of what value is all the rest? Of what avail to speak of "gravity, expansion, condensation," if we do not see the spreading of *His* clouds, the majestic crash of the thunder in His tabernacle?

And how good He is! If He opened the windows of heaven all at once, a deluge would sweep all life away. Instead, He makes small the drops of rain, they distil in refreshing "upon the place beneath." So is it with His afflictions; the suffering and the grief are after all but blessings in disguise for faith:

> "The clouds ye so much dread
> Are big with mercy, and will break
> In blessings on your head."

(3) That blaze of lightning is but the garment with which He covers Himself (Ps. 104: 2); the reverberating thunder but His voice who sits as King upon the waterflood (Ps. 29: 3–10). From His hand is sent food for the needy, judgment for the proud. The light from His presence strikes to the very depths of the sea; both His hands of power wield the bolt as a dart sure of its aim; such, rather than the translation given in our version, seems the meaning of ver. 32. His thunder is the mighty voice announcing His presence, and

the trembling cattle declare that He is near! "At the brightness that was before Him, His thick clouds passed . . . The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings and discomfited them. Then the channels of the waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered" (Ps. 18: 10–15).

(4) The storm is upon them now, and Elihu trembles. He calls upon Job to hear God's voice in it all; and, may we not well believe, also to hear His voice in the storm of sorrow that has fallen upon him. Breach upon breach it has come, the sharp lightning stroke of affliction, the awful thunder of God's chastening. God has been doing marvelously, things beyond our comprehension, but it is *God.* "Be still, and know that I am God."

"The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?"

(5) And if the fall of snow cover the earth as a winding-sheet, and the icy hand of winter be laid upon man, checking all his activities—it is His snow, His hand, to teach man His supreme power. The beast retires into its shelter; let us too enter into the "cleft of the rock," until these calamities be overpast. Whether the storm come in the whirlwind of the south, or from the frozen north, it is but *His* breath. How good then to humble ourselves under His mighty hand!

(6) All this exhibition of divine power is to accomplish His will. "Praise the Lord . . . fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Ps. 148: 7, 8). Sometimes it is as an "overflowing scourge," sometimes, "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it" (Ps. 65: 9), but always it is God whose actions, plans and purposes are before the eye of faith. Let Job forget himself, his troubles, his "friends;" let him "stand still and consider the wonderful works of God." Can he explain these purposes? Does he realize the light that shines behind the clouds? Does he understand the balancing of these clouds? How amazingly simple is such a statement. All nature is thus balanced, one force against another; and so too there is divine equilibrium in the clouds of life. He will "with the temptation provide *the* way of escape." All things work—but they work *together* for good to them that love God. There are the balancings of the clouds.

(7) And so we pass on to "the conclusion of the whole matter." Who or what is Job, but a frail man whose garments oppress him in the blast of the sirocco? Can he spread out the expanse which like a shining mirror arches over our heads? As he proceeds, Elihu himself becomes spokesman for all the lowly. We have undertaken to speak, who are but dust and ashes. "We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness." Let us hush our voices and listen to Him!

If we do not see the sunlight behind the clouds, it is still there, and in due time the mists will be blown away. Here comes an awful presence, a

golden glow from the unknown hidden north. "Behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber" (Ezek. 1: 4). It is the Almighty, we cannot fathom His greatness, but we know His uprightness is as great as His power. Let us bow in worship before Him: He listens not to those wise in their own conceits.

"Let us hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints." He is here!

Division IV (Chaps. 38–42 : 6).

Jehovah's testimony from Creation, testing Job and bringing him into the dust.

We have already called attention to the intimate connection between the addresses of Elihu and those of Jehovah which follow. Viewed merely as a piece of literary work this portion is one of matchless beauty and grandeur. Elihu had begun his address in all deference and quietness; he had carried forward his arguments in a masterly way, convincing both to intellect and conscience, which, from the silence of Job when repeatedly invited to reply, we may judge did not fail of their purpose. As he proceeds Elihu passes from the didactic style into the descriptive, setting forth the wisdom and greatness of God as seen in His great creation. So vivid do the descriptions of the storm become that we are constrained to think of it as actually impending—the lightnings flash, and the terrific thunder-peals fill him with dread, while the trembling herds show their fear. A golden glow is seen sweeping down in the dark storm-clouds from the north. In a few words of awed reminder to Job of the goodness as well as the majesty of God, Elihu closes his address, and Jehovah, out of the whirlwind just described utters His awful voice.

The voice of Jehovah! We are no longer listening to the gropings of the natural mind, as in the discourses of the friends; nor to the wild cries of a wounded faith, as in Job; nor even to the clear

sober language of Elihu—we are in the presence of Jehovah Himself, who speaks to us. That voice caused our guilty first parents to hide amid the trees of the garden. It bade Moses remove the shoes from off his feet at the burning bush, and later caused him to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake," amid the terrors of Sinai, while the people removed to a great distance. Later, that Voice—"a still small voice"—penetrated Elijah's soul with awe, as he realized that he was standing in the presence of the Lord.

The voice, perhaps more than the appearance, seems to reveal the person. If we could see the form and features of a man, mark the changes of his countenance and every gesticulation, without hearing his voice, it would not impress us as under reversed conditions. So the voice that came to Job out of the whirlwind brought him into the presence of One of whose character he had until now been greatly ignorant. He had spoken many excellent things about God, but His actual presence had never before been known. This, it will be found, furnishes the key to the amazing change wrought in Job.

When God is personally recognized as present, He is thus recognized in the entirety of His being. It is not merely His power that is seen, or His greatness or even His goodness, but *Himself*, the One in whose presence seraphim veil their faces as they cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Peter caught such a glimpse of Him by the sea of Galilee (Luke 5), and was constrained to cry, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

And Paul fell to the earth under the same revelation, as also John in the Apocalypse. The outward display in each of these cases was different, passing from a lowly Man in a fisher-boat to the enthroned Majesty in the heavens; but the essential fact is that it is Himself, and however much He may veil His glory, and meet man in mercy and grace, it is *God* who thus speaks and acts. If this is not realized, no grandeur of setting, no splendor of natural phenomena, can convey His message to man.

This is pitifully apparent in the use men make of the majestic panorama of nature daily spread before their eyes. The heavens as an infinitely spacious tent are arched overhead, resplendent by day and by night; the drapery of the clouds, the greatness of the mountains, the beauty of forest, field and sea—what do these tell to one who hears not the Voice? The heathen makes his image, or bows to sun and moon; the scientist sweeps the heavens with his telescope, and pierces the penetralia of earth with his microscope; he talks learnedly and interestingly of "laws of nature," of "principles of physics and of chemistry," of gravitation, cohesion and affinity: but unless he has heard the Voice of Jehovah, he knows Him no more than the poor deluded idolator groveling before the hideous Vishnu.

This ignorance is a guilty ignorance, "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: be-

cause that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," etc. (Rom. 1: 18–25). All men are in a measure conscious of this guilt and moral distance from God, and quite willing to remain in that condition. They stop their ears to the Voice of Him who is not far from every one of us.

If this is the inherent thought of this personal revelation of God, how important it was for Job to grasp it; how necessary too for us, as we speak of it, to realize *His* voice who speaks still in Nature and in His word. May it be ours, not to withdraw to a distance, nor to hide amid His beautiful trees, but to come near with unshod feet and veiled faces and hear what God the Lord will speak.

Looking at His words as a whole, we might be surprised at their character. They are not in one sense profound, as unfolding depths of theological truth. They are scarcely didactic in a moral sense, impressing upon man his duty. They are not so much a revelation of truth as a question to Job if he knows the truths that lie all about him in the vast creation of God. It is this which makes these words of Jehovah so wonderful. He speaks, not "in a tongue no man can understand," but in the language of nature, about the earth, the sky, the clouds and rain, and beasts and birds.

The number of the Division, the fourth, is most appropriate. It is, as we know, the number of the creature, of creation; it suggests also the testing of man, and the weakness and failure which that testing so often brings out. How amazing it is to think that the Creator should thus veil His glory

—that "light unapproachable"—and show Himself in the works of His hands.

For creation itself is, we would reverently say, a divine humiliation. It reminds us of Him who, "though He was in the form of God," emptied Himself of His glory and took a servant's form, being made in the likeness of men. Creation is the "lattice" behind which the Beloved hides Himself (Song 2: 9). And yet He reveals Himself thus to faith. The swaddling bands of Ocean are but a figure of those bands which He who made all things took upon Himself, when He became flesh. The whole universe, immense and boundless, forms the garments of the infinite God, who thus reveals Himself.

So we may apply this fourth Division to Himself. He "humbles Himself to behold the things in heaven and in earth." The significance of the number encourages us to believe that He is drawing near to us, that the message He has to give is one of mercy.

But this message tests and humbles man. He who boasted in his righteousness, who seemed to consider his knowledge all sufficient, is obliged to own his ignorance, weakness, and his unrighteousness. It is divinely done, and done so effectively that the lesson brings Job to his true place for all time. Creation, we may say, is like the clay which the Lord put upon the eyes of the blind man. Like him Job can say, "Now mine eye seeth Thee."

God lays His hand upon His vast creation—the heavens, earth and sea—as though to say He is Master and Lord of all; as though to say to Job,

"Canst thou doubt the power of such an One? or His wisdom? Nay, canst thou doubt the goodness of One who sends His rain to render fertile the earth for man's need, or His faithfulness who brings day by day His mercies to His creatures?"

This leads us to ask whether we may not expect a deeper meaning to all these questions as to nature —a moral and spiritual significance in them. Creation is a vast parable, and we fail to gather its lessons if we do not find, as we have already indicated, rich typical truth lying just beneath the surface. We cannot pretend to dogmatize; all that may be said is subject to correction; but we have no hesitation in saying that we should seek to find God's

"Secret meaning in His deeds."

We are encouraged to do this, for has He not said, "He that seeketh findeth?"

But let us take up our subject in an orderly way.

This testimony of Jehovah may be divided into two main parts, marked by Job's response to each.

1. The attributes of God seen in the universe (chaps. 38—40: 5).

2. His control over His creatures (chaps. 40: 6—41: 34).

Each portion has a character peculiar to itself, while both are closely linked together. The first dwells largely upon Jehovah's power, wisdom and goodness as displayed in the works of creation and providence; the second shows His control over those untameable beasts which defy man's power.

The entire address is largely in the form of questions. Job had presumed to sit in judgment upon Jehovah and His ways; his competence for this is tested: what does he know? What can he do? Shall the creature—so puny in power, so ignorant, and withal so filled with vain pride,—presume to instruct God as to His duties, to point out to Him His failures, in fact to usurp His prerogatives? The effect upon Job is seen in his two answers: he abases himself and lays his hand upon his mouth, in the first reply. In the second, he makes full confession of his sinful pride, and abhors *himself*, thus preparing the way for the outward recovery and restoration to prosperity.

We may say that the second part of the Lord's address is devoted to the humbling of Job's pride, by setting before him the creatures in which this pride is exhibited, in a typical way. The divine purpose can be seen throughout, and the effects are most blessed and complete.

Part I is devoted to the unfolding of the divine attributes of power, wisdom and goodness, in contrast to Job's weakness and ignorance. He is constrained to acknowledge his own lack of goodness in his confession—"I am vile." This portion falls into four sections.

1. God's call to Job (ch. 38: 1–3).

2. Questions as to the works of creation (vers. 4–38).

3. The manifestation of His care over His creatures (chs. 38: 39—39: 30).

4. The effect upon Job (ch. 40: 1–5).

1. *God's Call to Job.*

Out of that whirlwind, or golden storm-cloud (ch. 37: 22), Jehovah replies to the vain questionings and lamentations of Job. It is sufficient to notice that it is not a reply to Elihu, which effectually disposes of the thought that the darkening of counsel was by him. Elihu had been God's spokesman, leading up to the divine manifestation which is now upon us. As Elihu had addressed Job throughout, so Jehovah follows up the words of His servant. "My desire is that the Almighty would answer me," was Job's closing word (ch. 31: 35). He is now to have his wish granted; but how different the effect! "As a prince would I go near unto Him" (ver. 37), he had declared. "I am vile" is what he has to say when he hears His voice. Jehovah asks, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel," that hides the purposes of God and the truth, "by words without knowledge?" Job had poured out a flood of words — lamentations, protestations, accusations. There was much that was true and excellent, but all was vitiated, so far as God's purposes were concerned, by the exaltation of his own righteousness at the expense of Jehovah's. Instead of light, the clear flame of divine truth, all was a lurid smoke-cloud of unbelief which darkened the sun in the heavens. Who is this? Is it some divine being, Jehovah's equal, who was calling in question the other's acts? Was it some mighty angel, gifted with heavenly wisdom, that dared lay a charge against his Maker? No, it was a man, frail, ignorant, sinful. The Lord's question turns Job's

thought from all his fancied wrongs to himself. The psalmist, as he beholds the heavenly creation (Ps. 8), asks, "What is man?" Abraham, in God's presence, had declared he was but "dust and ashes" (Gen. 18: 27). Paul closes the opposer's mouth by asking, "Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9: 20). Man—the finite, fallible, fallen creature—shall he be more just than his Maker?

This is God's question to all the vain words of men. They may be the cries of fancied wrong, or the empty attempts of human reason to explain the condition of the world about us, and of the human family in particular; but whatever form they take, they do but darken true wisdom. Over the doorway to all libraries, filled with volumes of human science, history and philosophy, wilfully or ignorantly excluding the revelation of God, may be written this divine question.

And yet Jehovah is not seeking to crush Job, but rather to bring him to a true knowledge of himself and of God. Let him gird up his loins like a man. God will not ask questions which a man cannot understand. If his loins are "girt about with truth," he can answer—as indeed he does—these questions. The very fact that Jehovah thus addresses Job shows His purposes of mercy for him. His appeal is to reason, and thus to conscience. He leads Job through the vast, and yet familiar, scenes of creation. Can he solve one of ten thousand of its riddles? Can he open the hidden secrets of nature? If not, why does he attempt to declare God's counsels, and intrude into the purposes of One who

giveth not account to any of His matters; of whom the worshiping apostle declares, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11: 33).

2. *Questions as to the Works of Creation* (chap. 38: 4–38).

We come now to these questions as to God's creation, which give us a complete cycle of divine truth as exhibited in His works, fittingly grouped in seven parts.

(1) The foundations of the earth (vers. 4–7).
(2) The bounds of the sea (vers. 8–11).
(3) Day and night (vers. 12–15).
(4) Unknown depths (vers. 16–21).
(5) The elements (vers. 22–30).
(6) The heavenly bodies (vers. 31–33).
(7) The clouds and their control (vers. 34–38).

There is, in one sense, a simplicity in these questions that might lead to ready, though superficial, answers. We can imagine the youthful college student, with a smattering of geology, physical geography and astronomy, sitting down with complacence to such an "examination paper."

And yet let not modern science proclaim its ability to answer as Job could not. Advancement in outward knowledge there has been; discoveries of great laws and principles of nature; but can the scientist of the present day give more true and satisfying replies to these divine questions than could the patriarch of old? What after all is human knowledge but a knowledge, as Socrates said,

of our ignorance? Job's own noble words (chap. 28) show that he had glimpses of this great fact, when for the moment he was at leisure from his own troubles. What is the key to all these questions? It is *God*, the true knowledge of Himself. Knowing Him, we know the Author and Source of all knowledge. Leave Him out of account, and the sum of all science is a blank wall, beyond which still lies the hidden truth.

(1) Jehovah begins with the earth, the abode of man. Does Job know the history of his own dwelling place? Where was he when the great Architect laid its foundations, sunk, not in the shifting sands, or upon the lasting rock, but in the empty space of apparent nothingness?

> "When hung amid the empty space,
> The earth was balanced well."

Present day knowledge can talk learnedly of nebulæ and the solar system, of attraction and the laws of gravitation, and explain that the reciprocal action of these laws has given the earth its form and stable relation with heavenly bodies. It can explain that by the laws of cohesion and of chemical affinity the particles of the earth cleave together. But law means a Law-giver. Who has established these laws? How do they act unfailingly? Revelation, and that alone, gives the answer—"By Him all things consist" (Col. 1: 17). Where was Job, where was man, when the Lord established and set in motion these laws and principles? The form of the question met Job's knowledge at that time; it equally meets man's advanced knowledge at the

present. Indeed, its form was calculated to lead on his thought to wider fields of truth.

Who, Jehovah further asks, has laid down the measures of this great fabric and set His line upon it? The question suggests the possibility of another Presence, of One who was associated with Him, was His agent in laying down and carrying out the whole vast plan. Who was this? "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . . Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (Prov. 8: 22, 25). Or in the language of the New Testament, "All things were made (came into being, *εγενετο*) by Him" (Jno. 1: 3). Here was a truth more wondrous even than creation; it tells of the divine Associate who, while putting into being His Father's plans, and delighting in them, had His eyes upon other objects: "My delights were with the sons of men." God in nature, as in all else, is ever saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

The corner stone, the foundation of the earth, who laid it? Where is it? What is the basic law of physics or of chemistry? Does science know now, any more than Job did then? Atoms, ions, are grouped together, clasped and unclasped, as other great laws are brought to bear upon them. Where is the foundation law? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 11). To be brought to God, to know Him, is the object of all facts, and nature is only in harmony with the great mediatorial law when it thus leads us to Himself. Only as seen thus do we hear

the morning stars sing together. Only thus do the sons of God shout aloud for joy.

Most beautiful are these words describing the joy accompanying the establishment of the first creation. All nature was in harmony, and the heavens declared His glory. If discord has come in, it is not in any failure on His part to uphold all things by the word of His power. So too the heavenly intelligences, "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," shouted in exultant joy as the marvelous panorama of nature opened out before them.

Who can limit the beauty of this wondrous creation? Our limited senses grasp some of its perfections; but their interlacing one with another, their heights and depths, who can fathom? Who can say, were we as keen of sight and hearing as those "ethereal virtues" but that we too might catch "the music of the spheres?" If light and heat and sound are vibrations, who shall say that color has not a music all its own, that music has not a fragrance answering to the sweet melody?

How easily we pass beyond our finite knowledge! Even of this wondrous first creation we are profoundly ignorant. What we know but makes us realize the vast ocean of what we do not know. The light we have exposes the intensity of the surrounding darkness

But this stable earth, with its unknown or partially known laws, is but the ante-chamber of God's moral universe. The physical is typical of the moral and the spiritual. Laws of gravitation, of numerical proportion and chemical properties, are

types of deeper things. That two and two make four, always and everywhere, declares the unvarying righteousness of Him who has established that basic fact. Combustion, in all its various stages, is a reminder of that all-devouring holiness of "our God," who is "a consuming fire." As we dwell upon these attributes of God's moral universe, we must again be overwhelmed not only with the sense of our ignorance, but of our unlikeness to His established order.

If we pass on in thought to the new creation, how grand, varied and infinitely perfect is all that passes before us. The stable earth, with its great laws, is a shadow of that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness—of that new abode of truth and love into which sin can never come. God hath revealed to us these things by His Spirit; but "we know in part," and that knowledge will produce in us true humility, breathing forth its worship and praise.

For, blessed be God, He has given us to know Himself in the person of His beloved Son. This is life eternal, which links us with the coming glories which shall never fade. Can we not in fuller, higher way, join in the melody of the "sons of the morning"—for we are children of the day—and shout aloud with and beyond "the sons of God?"

No need to ask those whose eyes and hearts have thus been opened what part *they* have contributed to all this greatness, goodness and love. We hide our faces, and ascribe all the glory unto the Lamb.

Such in some feeble measure is the great truth involved in Jehovah's first question. When that question shall have been fully answered as to man

and as to God, we can join in the language of the psalm :

"Praise ye Jehovah.

Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights.
Praise ye Him, all His angels:
Praise ye Him, all His hosts.
Praise ye Him, sun and moon:
Praise Him, all ye stars of light" (Ps. 148).

"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (Rev. 5: 13).

(2) Jehovah passes from the earth to "that great and wide sea," which is described not in its original creation, as part of the heavens and the earth, but as gushing forth from its mother's womb. It covered the whole face of the world, and "darkness was upon the face of the deep." Left to itself it would have enveloped all; but its Maker was its Master, and set bounds to it, breaking as it were into great mountain chains to make a place for it, barred and closed to all egress. Its storms and fury in His almighty hands are but the wailings of a new born babe; He wraps it in the swaddling clothes of clouds and thick darkness, and hushes it to rest.

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the

noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Ps. 93: 3, 4).

Thus at the beginning, and again when in judgment He permitted it to engulf the earth, God has restrained this restless mighty ocean. Man gazes upon it with awe, but cannot control its power. His "thousand fleets sweep over it in vain;" he "marks the earth with ruin," but his control stops with the shore.

How fittingly does this mighty ocean teach man his helplessness and ignorance! What secrets do its hidden depths hold! God alone has controlled it; He holds back its proud waves with bars that they cannot pass.

So too in the ocean of evil—the pride of Satan which burst forth in rebellion against God, when the angels kept not their first estate. God's restraining hand holds all in check. The wicked, like the foaming sea, seem to rise higher and higher in their violence and pride, but God says to them, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Thus His restraining power over evil is seen. As Job witnessed iniquity seemingly triumphant, as he looked into the dark surging of his own self-willed heart, he might well have been appalled; who but God can control evil?

We look forward to the time when this control shall be absolute in that new heavens and new earth, when "there shall be no more sea." In anticipation of that day, when evil shall be banished to its eternal abode away from God's redeemed creation, we can own Him as supreme alone.

The earth and sea include the two great mater-

ial factors which are thus put before man's eyes.

(3) Jehovah passes next to the great recurring features of nature, as seen in the day and night. Has Job ever commanded a single morning to appear, or caused the dawn to know the place of its appearing? With all his supposed knowledge and power, man cannot command the forces of nature to do his bidding. Day by day the light appears in its appointed place, flooding the earth with light from which the guilty flee. Evening falls, and no word of man can arrest or quicken this constant action. Only One gave His command at the beginning, "Let there be light," and since that time evening and morning have known their appointed time and place. Joshua, speaking in the word of the Lord can arrest the course of the day, and the prophet gives Hezekiah a divine sign in turning back the shadow upon the sun-dial; but these only emphasize the fact that none but God can command the light. "I form the light, and create darkness" (Isa. 45: 7). Let us gaze with rapture at the glorious sunset, or watch with awe the dawning of a new day, and say from the depths of our hearts, "The day is thine, the night also is thine: Thou hast prepared the light and the sun" (Ps. 74: 16). The dawn knows its place—in the east, and yet varying daily as the year progresses. Astronomy marks these varying changes of place, and of time as well. All is perfect, and all sings His praise who commanded and maintains it. "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing" (Ps. 65: 8, *marg.*) Our wisdom is to see and own it all as divine, to say with the poet:

"On the glimmering limit, far withdrawn,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn."

With the dawning of the light evil men hide themselves. Literally as well as figuratively is this true of "the unfruitful works of darkness." As the mark of the signet-ring upon the formless clay, so the light stamps upon the face of the earth the varied forms and colors of all things. They stand out like a lovely garment—or the reverse, a scene of ruin—under the light. The light shows all things as they are: "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5: 13). The *night* is the light of the wicked; they hate the light, and will not come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved. The entrance of the light arrests their deeds. Their uplifted arm is broken.

Thus the light of God's presence detects evil. When He causes the dawning of a new day—"The day of the Lord"—evil doers shall be shaken out of the earth. For this cause, His people who are "children of the light and of the day," order their life by the light. For this cause, in that fair land where there is no night, nothing that defileth can enter. It is the home of the light. None could remain there but the sons of light. "The Lamb is the light thereof."

This appeal to day and night is most effectual. Shall Job accuse One who is Light, who sees all things as they are? Shall he doubt One who knows the secrets of his heart, and the reason for these chastenings? Do not these questions give a hint that God will cause Job's night to end, and

at the appointed time cause His dayspring to visit the poor sufferer?

(4) In intimate connection with the all-manifesting power of the light, God probes Job further. Does he know secret things?—"which belong unto God." The hidden depths of the sea with its countless dead; the gates of death and what lies beyond. Has Job searched this out? Has he fully known the breadth of the earth—all that it contains? Does modern science know it really? What is the "home," or origin of light, or of darkness? Men have been inquiring into "the origin of evil;" what do they know apart from divine revelation? Modern science sees more clearly of late years that the sun is not the origin of light, which exists independently of that, or any other visible source. These questions of Jehovah are addressed not merely to Job, with his knowledge limited to that time, but to men of the present day. Whether we regard verse 21 as a question, as in our version, or as a statement in divine irony—"Thou knowest it for then thou wast born," etc.—the meaning is obvious.

(5) Jehovah speaks next of the phenomena of snow and rain, of frost and dew, with their effects upon the earth and man. Here again man's ignorance and helplessness are displayed in the presence of the wisdom, power and beneficence of God, as well as His chastening hand.

The snow and hail are laid up in storehouses—where? Not in some hidden locality, in vast masses, not merely in the viewless vapor filling the firmament, as science now would say, but back of

all that, those storehouses of mercy and of judgment are in the *hand of God.* It is by His word they are produced—the snow, for protection of the grass in winter, and for cooling and refreshing in summer; the hail, in smiting plagues and sweeping judgments (Isa. 28: 17). Snow, we are told, is produced by the action of cold upon vapor, turning its molecules into crystals of lovely and varied form. Those forms are planned—by whom? Whose laws are fulfilled by these tiny crystals? The working of whose mind do they display?

Next to its coldness, perhaps more striking than that, snow is the standard for absolute whiteness, of purity. Perhaps Job did not know that this whiteness was caused by the pure white light reflected from the countless faces of its crystals. But what "treasures" of whiteness are reserved by God? He is light, and the snow reflecting the sunlight, suggests how completely His essential righteousness is displayed in that work of redemption which enables Him to say: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1 : 18). Sins that once cried for vengeance, now, through the precious blood of Christ, reflect the glory of God's character! "To declare His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3 : 26). In the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus," He has exhaustless stores of whiteness and protection for the sins of the world. What fearful judgments will follow the rejection of that grace! "The wrath of the *Lamb!*"—the "snow" now falling in a pitiless storm of destruction.

This thought is emphasized in the hail, the frozen drops of rain. Those gentle showers which water the earth that it may bring forth its fruits, turned into death-dealing wrath! For a Christ-rejecting world there is laid up "wrath against the day of wrath," of which the hail is a figure (Ex. 9 : 22 ; Hag. 2 : 17; Ps. 18 : 12; Rev. 16 : 21).

And yet these fearful judgments—God's "strange work"—will tell forth the glory of a righteousness, inflexible as well as full of love. "Praise Him . . . fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Ps. 148 : 8).

Let Science tell us all it can discover of the laws and effects of the snow crystals, of the varied temperature of the air currents, of electric discharges and equalizations; let us penetrate as deeply as we may into these second causes, and we shall find them to be the outer court of His tabernacle, the display of His attributes, leading us on into the holiest of His revealed Person, as seen in Christ Jesus.

Passing from these phenomena of winter and of storm, the Lord asks as to the method of distribution of the light (for this seems the thought of ver. 24). How amazing are the "partings" of the light—permeating every part of the earth where its rays fall. How unthinkably swift are "the wings of the morning," flashing from sun to earth in a few moments. How beautiful are those "partings," as seen in the spectrum, the rainbow painting in living colors the whole landscape. Why and how is one object green, another blue, another red? Is it sufficient to say that each substance reflects

certain rays? That these, in turn, are produced by varied vibrations of inconceivable rapidity? We ask about the "X-rays," with their penetrating power; about the ultra-violet and red rays, of chemical and heating power. Science has much to tell us that might well fill us with wonder and amazement, and with awe and worship—of WHOM?* The more we know *merely* of His displays, the less we *really* know of Himself, save as He makes Himself known in Christ.

From the east, the apparent source of the light,

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*It would lead us far into this field, if we were but able, to search into the endless details of the laws, manifestations and effects of the light, and their spiritual significance. It is a field in which comparatively little has been done, and yet what has been told us might well make us hunger for more. The white undivided light is composed of three main rays—blue, green, red. God is Light! Three is manifestation. God fully manifested is seen as three persons. Blue, the heavenly color, tells of the Father in heaven; green, the color of life upon earth, tells of the Spirit, the giver and maintainer of life; red, the color of heat, speaks of the Son, the expression of the love of God, whose precious blood is the measure of that love.

The three kinds of rays—the light ray, the heat ray, and the actinic, or chemical ray, may also tell us of the Trinity. The first, of the Father, who "hath shined in our hearts;" the second, of the Son, healing, warming, sustaining; the third, of the Spirit's most needed but inscrutable working. All are inter-related and complementary in their work. What would light be without heat? It could only show the wreckage of creation; spiritually, it manifests the hideous ruin of man's fallen nature. And what would both light and heat effect, save to warm, and ultimately consume the ruin? So all waits on the actinic rays in which *life* is sustained; the Spirit must accompany and make good all the brightness of divine revelation, all the warmth of the love of Christ.

comes also the sweeping east wind, distributed over the land in the storm—a picture of wrath, *His* wrath—who in the light had spoken so silently. But even the east wind is held in His fists, controlled by His will.

But storms and storm-clouds are but the prelude to the rain. Here, too, God is seen, bringing refreshing after the storm. So with Job, his chastening will be followed by the showers. Who knows how to "divide," to distribute, these refreshing showers? Man would distribute them unevenly, or out of due time. God knows when and how to send the welcome relief. Nay, the very lightning and thunder are but the vehicles upon which the showers come, as Science now declares.

How widely distributed is this rain, reaching out beyond the abodes of man, to the waste places of the earth. Where the tiniest blade of grass grows, there is seen the truth that, "His tender mercies are over all His works."

Nor are these things merely *acts;* they are, so to speak, the *offspring* of God's love and care. Rain and dew, ice and frost, are all the children of the great and good God.

"These are Thy works, Thou Parent of all good!"

Can we doubt Him? Shall we misjudge Him? How our unbelief and discontent witness against us, as Job's complainings did against him.

(6) Pointing next to the heavenly host, the Lord almost takes the words of Job (chap. 9 : 9). He names special constellations, Pleiades and Orion, the groups making the Zodiac, and the Great Bear,

ever pointing to the north. Commentators suggest varied meanings to these verses. Some think the allusion in the Pleiades is to a cluster of brilliant jewels: "Canst thou fasten the shining brooch on the bosom of the night?" Others point out that Pleiades is the constellation that belongs to the Spring, as Orion to the Winter. To loose the bands of the latter would be to break up the Winter, as binding the sweet influences of the former would be to delay the Spring. Canst thou hinder the coming of Spring, or cause Winter to come to an end? Canst thou change the ordered and onward march of the hosts of heaven, or cause the North to change its position? It has been pointed out that *Kima*, the Pleiades, means a "hinge," or pivot—that upon which all the heavenly bodies turn. Science points out that the whole visible universe is slowly, to our view, (yet with what inconceivable swiftness!) turning round an unknown centre, apparently not far from the *Kima*, or hinge, of Pleiades. What if God were giving a hint to Job of this great centre which held all things to itself?—if He were seeking to show him the One who holds all things in His hand, and pointing him forward to that

> "One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves?"

One thing we do know, He, and He alone, can hold the stars in His hand, number and call them all by name, and bring them forth in due order, "for that He is strong in power, not one faileth" (Is. 40 : 26). The prophet reminds afflicted Israel

that this One knows their affliction and their way. The greatest human power will grow weary, but "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40 : 27–31).

As we gaze into those heavens, our feebleness might appal and overwhelm us. But when we ask, "What is man?" He shows us Him who was made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, and set above the works of His hands" (Ps. 8; Heb. 2)—we see one like unto the Son of Man, yet the Ancient of Days. He it is who holds the seven stars in His right hand, yea, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given. He can bind and loose. He can break the bonds of the long wintry night of sin, and bring on the eternal spring-time. Already we can hear His voice: "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing is come" (Song 2 : 11, 12). He has not given to us to change the order of nature, or to ascend up into those heavens, but He teaches us to give the true answer to His questions, and that answer is, "We see Jesus."

> "I know He liveth now
> At God's right hand above,
> I know the throne on which He sits,
> I know His truth and love."

(7) Jehovah concludes this portion of His address with fresh questionings as to the clouds, storms, and rain. Can Job bring down rain, or speak to the lightning flash? Has he that understanding

heart that knows the reason for the clouds—whether of rain or of grief—that can bring the refreshing showers upon the dusty earth. What food for reverent meditation we have in all this. May the spirit of the Psalms, the 8th and the 19th, the 104th, and the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the closing psalms, be upon us as we survey it all.

3. *The Manifestation of His care over His creatures* (chaps. 38 : 39—39 : 30).

We have thus been brought face to face with our weakness and ignorance in view of the infinite wisdom and power of God. We come next to the display of that as seen in His protecting and providing care over all His creatures. We pass, in this portion, from the glories of the Creator to look at the wisdom and goodness of the God of Providence. He has not only devised the wondrous plan of the universe, but has filled the earth with living creatures, who are dependent upon Him for life and all things. This portion may be divided into the following parts :

(1) The beasts of prey (chap. 38 : 39–41).
(2) The wild goats and their young (chap. 39 : 1–4).
(3) The wild ass of the desert (vers. 5–8).
(4) The wild aurochs (vers. 9–12).
(5) The ostrich (vers. 13–18).
(6) The horse (vers. 19–25).
(7) The hawk and eagle (vers. 26–30).

The series opens with a declaration of God's provision for beasts and birds of prey, as seen in the lion and raven; next, the wild animals of the

mountain and desert come under His all-wise care; then the control of those beasts confessedly beyond man's power in strength and swiftness; closing with the control of the migratory instincts of the birds. It is significant that the series opens and closes with mention of beasts and birds of prey. They might seem to be worthless, if not positively injurious, and yet He cares for them with unerring wisdom. Shall He fail to watch over His child who knows and trusts Him?

(1) To what distraction would man be brought if he had for a single day to provide food for even one class of these creatures. Only of God can it be said, "These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season." "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." "That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good" (Ps. 104: 21, 27, 28). God not only tolerates, but cares for these creatures which prey upon others. They are part of His wise plan—once put under the hand of man and subject to him, but now turned against him as enemies. Thus Satan, whose assaults Job was feeling, was only the creature of God's will, working even by his enmity the purposes of God. If Job is ignorant of his devices, God is not, and will bring good out of all his ravening and roaring.

So also the ravens cry, the young and helpless ones, yet God feedeth them. These feeders upon carrion may seem worse than useless to man, but God takes care of them. In each case here it is the young of animals that are the objects of His care.

They are perfectly helpless, with nothing but their cry to attract attention; God does not turn a deaf ear even to the croak of a raven. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12: 24).

(2) What does Job know of the habits of the wild animals inhabiting the inaccessible mountains? "The high hills are a refuge for the goats" (Ps. 104: 18). He might know in general the period of gestation of these elusive creatures, but does he know and watch over each parent animal, guard its life, safely bringing it through its time of peril? How amazing and uniform it all is, how utterly beyond man's knowledge or power. And these young, for a brief time sustained by their parent, then going off by themselves—who watches over them?

If God cares for these "rock-climbers," shall He not watch the steps of His timid people who are seeking to climb over the rugged rocks of adversity? Will He not be with them in the birth-throes of fearful experiences, and give them a happy issue out of all their troubles?

(3) Passing from the mountain to the plain, Jehovah points out the solitary denizen of those waste places, the wild ass. He is different entirely from the wild goats in ways and in habit, but one thing he has in common with them, he is absolutely dependent upon his Creator. What control has Job over a creature like this, who knows no bonds, serves no master? As he thinks of their freedom, Job might sigh beneath his burdens. God is able

to loosen his bonds. Let him not doubt, but wait on God.

(4) Still dwelling upon wild creatures, God asks if Job can control and cause the great aurocks to serve him, or the wild antelope of the plains. Will he plough and bear the burdens of domestic labor like the ox? That wild, untamed nature yields but to One. Can Job doubt that He will control all things, even the wild powers of evil, and make them the obedient servants of His will? Thus God will bring into captivity the wild and wandering thoughts of His poor servant, and bring a bountiful harvest of blessing through his bitter experiences.

(5) All things, be they never so wild and apparently senseless, are His creatures, not forgotten by Him. Here is another one, the ostrich of the desert, whose wings vibrate as she races with the speed of the wind. There is, according to scholars, no mention of the peacock here. The general thought of verse 13 is thus: the ostrich does not use its wings and feathers to protect and care for its young, but careless and neglectful of its eggs and its brood, flees from the real or fancied enemy. Here is a creature whom God Himself apparently has deprived of the ordinary maternal instincts. Yet some One — Who? — cares for the helpless brood.*

* We scarcely need mention the unbelief which says that the writer is mistaken in this description of the ostrich. Even so excellent an author as Dr. Wood falls here into this gross evil, of unintentionally saying that *God* made a mistake in His description of the ostrich!—that its eggs are left upon the sand to deceive prowlers who are seeking the nest, or that they are for the food of the newly-hatched birds! We prefer to take our natural history,

(6) By a natural transition from the swiftness of the ostrich, Jehovah passes to that embodiment of swiftness, strength and grace, the horse, and more particularly the war-horse. Job is asked if he has given strength to the horse, and combined it with the grace and beauty expressed by his flowing mane. His prancing is as agile as the grasshopper, his neighing and shrill snorting striking terror to the heart. What more majestic and withal so terrifying as the pawing rage of the battle-horse, eager for the fray? Nothing can turn him from his onward dash to meet the charging hosts. The arms and accoutrements of his rider clash against his sides as he rushes over the ground, "swallowing it" in his headlong speed. The noise of battle is music to him; he scents the battle from afar, the shouts of the captains and the clash of arms. Here is a beast, not exactly wild, but endued with all the strength and swiftness of the wildest. What part has Job had in devising and creating so remarkable a creature?

The horse, especially in the days of which our book speaks, and in the East, was chiefly used in war. God warned His people not to put their trust in this mighty agent of war: "The horse is a vain thing for safety." "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20: 7). It is He who "hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (Ex. 15: 1). So infinitely ex-

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as all else, from the Divine Author. There can be no doubt that all that is here said of this wild bird of the desert is absolutely true, and according to all right interpretation of its action.

alted is Jehovah above all His creatures. Let Job remember how puny he too is, and humble himself before Him who is God over all. His deliverance must come, not from horses, but from the Lord on high.

(7) Returning in the cycle to the creatures that prey upon others, Jehovah asks if it is Job's wisdom that directs the hawk to take its southward journey as the winter approaches. What mysterious power, called instinct, is that which moves the birds to migrate to warmer climes? If it is merely the lack of food, why do they fly when food is still in plenty, as the swallows? and why in flocks? and why to the South? "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming" (Jer. 8 : 7).

The eagle—does it rise to giddy heights at man's command, and build its nest on some high crag from whence its eye takes in the far distant prey for its helpless young? It follows that battle into which the horse has rushed, and "where the slain are, there is she." God uses these all to fulfil His will, and He sustains and cares for them. He will call them to one great feast at last, when the angel shall summon them: "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Rev. 19: 17, 18).

Let Job but learn his lesson, and he will be satis-

fied with good things; his youth will be renewed like the eagle, he will mount up with wings, never again to grow weary.

And so Jehovah descends to human level and points out these familiar objects in the scene about the suffering saint. Does he see that prowling lioness? Who gives it food for its young? Who hearkens to the hungry croak of the raven? Who watches over the mother-gazelle? Who controls the wild ass or the mighty aurochs? Who preserves the brilliant but stupid ostrich, the prancing battle-horse? Who guides the hawk in its homing flight, or the king of birds, the eagle, with its home on high? There is but one answer:

> "He everywhere hath sway,
> And all things serve His might;
> His every act pure blessing is,
> His path unsullied light."

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." "My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. 104 : 24, 34).

4. *The effect upon Job* (chap. 40 : 1–5).

Thus Jehovah closes His first testing of Job. He has taken, as it were, the clay of Creation and put it upon the eyes of the poor sufferer, who had been blinded by his own griefs to all the power, wisdom and goodness of God. Will Job "go and wash in the pool of Siloam?" Will he bow to the testing of his Creator?

"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty

instruct Him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Here lies the root of Job's trouble: he had sat in judgment upon God; he had accused the Omnipotent of evil? God has drawn near, has made His presence felt, and lifted the veil from the face of Nature to reveal part of His character. What is the effect upon the proud man?

"*I am vile; what shall I answer Thee?*"
"*I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*"

Many words had Job uttered: at the beginning of his sufferings, words of faith in God; even during his "crying in the night," many beautiful and noble thoughts had fallen from his lips, but no such words as these—music in the ear of God—confession, contrition, mute acknowledgment of the whole error of his thought.

Here practically closes the test of Job; and yet in faithfulness Jehovah will probe still further to the deepest recesses of his heart, and lay bare its potential evil. So we must listen further to what the Lord has to speak.

In His second address the Lord deepens the work already taking place in Job's heart. In the first, Job is silenced and convinced by the majesty, power and wisdom of God. Such a Being, whose perfections are displayed in His works, cannot be arbitrary and unjust in His dealings with man. If His wisdom in the care of beasts and birds was beyond Job's comprehension, it must also be the case in His afflicting hand. The great effect of this first address upon Job seems to be that Jehovah has become a reality to him.

In the second address these impressions are deepened. God will not leave His servant with his lesson half learned: He plows more deeply into his heart until the hidden depths of pride are reached and judged. The second address therefore dwells upon this pride so common to the creature. He invites Job, as it were, to see whether *he* can humble the proud and bring them low. The manifest implication is that Job himself is in that class.

The character of the address is very similar to the first as to its themes. God still would teach, from Nature's primer, the profoundest lessons of His ways. Thus we have in behemoth and leviathan, creatures like the aurochs or the horse, of immense strength and courage, the creatures of God, and preserved by Him. But there is a manifest typical and moral meaning connected with these creatures, which in that respect goes beyond the others. There the lesson was largely God's providential *care;* here it is rather His *control* of creatures whose strength defies man. They are in that way types of pride and of resistless strength, representing the culmination of creature power. Can Job subdue or control these? Nay, does He not find himself *morally* in their company, for has he not lifted up himself against God?

The address falls, as did the first, into four parts:

1. The call to Job to take the throne (chap. 40 : 6–14).
2. Behemoth—resistless strength (vers. 15–24).
3. Leviathan — creature-pride fully manifested (chap. 41).
4. Job completely humbled (chap. 42 : 1–6).

1. *The Call to Job to take the throne* (chap. 40 : 6–14.)

God still speaks to Job out of the whirlwind, as He had already appeared to him. His divine glory and majesty are thus still before the patriarch. Yet in the call, "Gird up thy loins now like a man," we have encouragement as well as rebuke. God is not crushing His poor foolish servant, but appealing to his reason as well as his conscience. Already Job has learned, as indeed he has in measure known, God's power, wisdom and goodness. But the present appeal particularly is to his conscience. Will he annul, deny God's righteous judgment, and condemn God that *he* may establish a petty human righteousness? For this is really what lay at the bottom of Job's complaints; he was suffering affliction which he did not deserve; he, a righteous man, was being treated as though he were unrighteous. The conclusion then was unavoidable—the One who was thus afflicting him was unjust! Elihu had already pressed upon Job these awful consequences of his thoughts: "I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment" (chap. 34 : 5). "Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?" (chap. 35: 2). The Lord would press home upon Job the heinousness of this sin. He has presumed to judge God—upon what grounds? Has *he* divine power and majesty? Can *he* speak in a voice of thunder?

If indeed he is thus qualified, Jehovah as it were invites him to take his seat upon the throne of divine judgment. Let him put on his robes of

pomp and dignity, array himself in grandeur and majesty, and let the outpourings of his wrath flow out upon everyone that is proud, and bring him low. What awful, holy irony! And yet how divinely just. If Job can sit in judgment upon *God*, he surely is qualified to administer all His affairs better than He! He can quell the proud rebellion of every evil doer, and bring men into the dust before him. Has he done so with his own proud and rebellious heart? Has he humbled even his friends? How much less the whole world.

Can such language be used of Job?—"Thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104: 1, 2). "Those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. 4: 37). If so, then Jehovah Himself will be the first to praise him, and to confess that he is able to succor himself. But had his own right hand even arrested the hordes that had driven away his possessions? or averted the storm that had swept away his children? Alas, it had taken a potsherd wherewith to scrape himself; his garment was sackcloth, *not* glory and majesty; his seat the ashes of a blasted life, *not* the throne of glory.

Is it cruel of Jehovah thus to deal with a poor heart-broken creature? Rather let us ask, would it have been kindness to leave him holding his pride about him as a garment, and railing against the Almighty? Only thus can pride be abased, by being brought face to face with its nothingness in the presence of the majesty and boundless goodness of God. Until Job has learned this, and learned

it to the full, all the dispensations of God with him in his afflictions, and the reasonings of his friends and of Elihu, are in vain, and worse.

2. *Behemoth—resistless strength* (vers. 15–24).

We are brought thus to hearken to the application by Jehovah of the lesson of creature-strength and pride, as exhibited and typified in the behemoth and leviathan. Our present section deals with the former of these creatures; the next, with the latter. The first is primarily a land animal, the second is chiefly aquatic. Together, they embrace, in type, all creation.

Students are agreed that the first beast is the hippopotamus, the model of resistless force and strength. It is one of Job's fellow-creatures, but how transcendently mighty. Every portion of his anatomy speaks of strength—loins and body, legs and bones, and even tail, are instinct with this power. He is thus a chief of God's creatures, excelling in strength. With his sharp swordlike teeth, furnished by his Creator, he mows down the grass like an ox—harmless too when not roused up, for the other beasts sport in the same pasture. He lies down in the shade, taking his ease; for he fears nothing, even if a raging flood should seek to engulf him. Can he be caught in a trap, like some lesser animal, or be held with a cord and ring through his nostrils?

In other words, he is an untamable, uncontrollable beast. He is of no use for man's service. The entire description gives the impression of absolute power used for utterly selfish ends. It lives for

itself, refusing to yield its strength to the service of others.

And yet he is but a creature, endowed by God, for His all-wise purposes, with superhuman strength. Let Job, let all who are tempted to trust in their own strength, whether of body, as here, or of heart and mind, consider this creature, self-sufficient and resistless. How puny will their own arm appear.

Some have thought this creature must typify Satan, in his character as primate among God's creatures (Ezek. 28), excelling in strength and pride. The same would be true as to leviathan, in the next chapter. Both beasts typify power and pride. It must be confessed therefore that it does not seem altogether fanciful to say with Wordsworth, "It seems probable that *behemoth* represents the Evil One acting in the animal and carnal elements of man's own constitution, and that *leviathan* symbolizes the Evil One energizing as his *external* enemy. Behemoth is the enemy *within* us; leviathan is the enemy without us."

But as "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," we may think of these creatures as figures of evil *men* energized and controlled by Satan, rather than Satan himself. Merely as a suggestion, it is asked whether in behemoth, the creature of *earth*, we do not have a figure of "the man of sin," the Beast that riseth out of the earth (2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13 : 11–18). He would stand thus for the Antichrist, the lawless one, who is the consummation of all evil in connection with the professed people of God.

But "even now are there many antichrists;" and may we not trace in this hideous creature that "mystery of iniquity that already worketh?"—that insidious development of evil which, outwardly claiming a place among God's creatures, which live for man's use, is really exalting itself, even to the ultimate denial of all that is called God! This is that spirit of antichrist so rife in the profession of to-day, denying the Father and the Son; boasting in its own sufficiency, glorying in its own strength and achievements, living for *itself*. This is what is at work now, feeding itself along with the timid sheep and the serving ox, but utterly unlike them.

Nor need we be surprised that God should speak thus of evil in Job's early age. For sin has this character from the beginning, only it develops into the full display of its nature as revelation advances. To Job thus, behemoth would stand for that creature of pride which flourishes amid the professed people of God. If he asked who was the counterpart of that evil beast, he could not solace himself by looking at Eliphaz or his companions. In the pride of his own self-righteousness, "showing himself that he is God," he would catch glimpses of this evil thing one day to be developed in all the fulness of hideous apostasy. What more awful revelation of the evil of pride could he, or we, have? Self-righteousness, self-seeking, pride of conduct or of character, denies its need of Christ and of God. Such is sin in the flesh—incorrigible and hideous. Who can subdue it or change its nature?

And yet behemoth is controlled, though not by

man. God is over all, and "He who now letteth, will let." The flesh will be controlled by the Spirit; and, as He abides in the Church, He does not permit the full development of iniquity. So, too, in a more modified way, the Spirit controls and hinders the activity of the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

So also in Job's day; he could recognize an evil principle within himself which God alone could check, a principle which he learns to abhor and to judge as himself—leaving aside for the time all the conscious confidence in God, and the really excellent fruits of grace in his heart. But this will come before us more fully in a little while.

3. *Leviathan—creature-pride fully manifested* (chap. 41).

Most interpreters are agreed that in "leviathan" we have the crocodile of Egypt, which is described in great detail. As the hippopotamus is largely a land animal, the crocodile is chiefly aquatic, and both are amphibious. This creature is described in a manner quite similar to the previous one, but at much greater length. We may therefore seek to recognize the various parts into which the description is divided. There seem to be three:

(1) His untamable ferocity (vers. 1–11).
(2) Analysis of his various parts (vers. 12–24).
(3) His preeminent strength (vers. 25–34).

Before however going into details, it will be well to inquire as to the significance of this beast, as

compared with the former. That, as we have suggested, typifies the spirit of apostasy from revealed truth, culminating in the Antichrist, the man of sin. This, as arising out of the water, suggests the first Beast of Rev. 13, the great world-power, as seen in the various beasts in Daniel's vision of chap. 7. If in behemoth we have the spirit of apostasy in religion, in leviathan we see it in civil government. It is the world-power, rather than that of the false prophet; and yet the two are closely linked together. But this is looking forward to the culmination in the last days. The principle (independence of God), seeking to make itself a name, has been manifest since the days of Cain, who established a city, and of Nimrod, the founder of the first great world-empire (Gen. 10 : 8–10). Nor is this confined to national pre-eminence; the same spirit of strong self-will, brooking no contradiction, is seen in the individual as well, an untamable insubjection to authority. Who has ever bound and held the proud will of man? But this brings us to the details, as opened for us in our chapter.

(1) The closing question as to behemoth leads on to a similar one as to leviathan. Can he be captured with a net or hook, by a line pressing down upon his tongue? Can he be bound as an ordinary fish with a rush rope passed through the gills? Is he timid and fawning, or loyal and subservient? Can he be made into a plaything, like a bird, for the amusement of the household? Is he a staple commodity in the markets, bought and sold? If not caught as a fish, is he assailable with darts, with weapons? Whoever has attempted this will surely

remember the fearful battle, and make no further attempt. He is the despair of all opposition; none dare stir him up or stand before him.

If this be so with this mere creature, who can stand before the Creator? (For thus should verse 10 be rendered, leading up to verse 11, "Who will stand before *Me?*") Who has first given to Jehovah, that he can demand it back again? Or, as the apostle asks, "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (Rom. 11 : 35).

In all this first part of the description, we have the fierce, unapproachable, untamable character of this creature; the evident deduction is, as already indicated, if the *creature* be so mighty, what must the Creator be? But, as has been said, we are led to expect something more than this declaration of God's greatness and power. It is not only a mighty power that is described, but a power for evil. So Satan is spoken of as the dragon (Rev. 20: 2), and as ruler of the earth, through his instrument the ruler of Egypt, it is said of him, "In that day the Lord, with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27 : 1, 12, 13). How remarkable that the world-ruler should thus be spoken of. Can we fail to see the connection with the power of evil seen in our chapter?

Man's rule, as opposed to God's—how common it has been! In Nebuchadnezzar we have this pride displayed, at the very summit of Babylon's greatness. And ever since his day, how kings have

dreamed of world-empire—Median, Grecian, Roman, and all the lesser Caesars since that day. How fierce and cruel they have been—how intractable, how untamable. Who could dispute with them in the zenith of their power—"remember the battle, do so no more."

Is Job willing to be found in such company—of men who, to gratify their own ambitions, would cast Jehovah from His throne? What awful wickedness, and how appalling!

Coming to the individual application, we see in this "crooked serpent" a figure of the perverted will of man. All sin has its roots in disobedience. Smile at it as men may, what more awful thing is there than this self-will—the carnal mind. The mind of the flesh "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8 : 7). Of what avail is the effort to reform the world, to tame the crocodile? Men may dream and plan, and seek to banish misery from the earth—but even amid its groans, creation mocks at human efforts to subdue its own perverted will. Again, how awful for Job to find such possibilities of evil and rebellion lurking in *his* heart.

(2) Coming to details, Jehovah shows that not only is the beast irresistible, if looked at as a whole, but that each of its members declares the same all-conquering power. Beginning with its dreadful mouth, with sharp, cruel teeth set round, the Lord points out that all is of the same character. The scales upon his head and body are, like pride, an impervious armor—each scale linked to its fellow, and no "joint of the harness" where an arrow

could pierce. The very sneezing of such a creature is like sulphurous light from hidden fires within (vers. 18–21); his eyes flash forth like rays of the rising sun. Like the horses of the sixth trumpet, his mouth belches forth "fire, and smoke, and brimstone" (Rev. 9 : 17). His neck is the embodiment of strength, causing despair, not joy, to dance before him — he is the herald of misery. His flanks, usually a vulnerable part in animals, unprotected by the ribs, are compact and impervious. Within is a heart like stone, indifferent to all fear.

Such is the description of the beast itself; we may well believe that the spiritual reality is inconceivably more dreadful. A Satanic emperor of the world! —fierce, resistless, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter!" Who dare defy him to his face? What weapon can penetrate his armor? The hidden fires of the pit flash in his very "sneezing," his threats and words, when "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Rev. 13 : 6). What unbroken stiffness of neck, which causes all to bend before it, filling the earth with ruin and men's hearts with woe; an orgy of misery, a carnival of despair dances gleefully before him—sword and pestilence and death, the inevitable accompaniments of autocratic and Satanic power. There will be no vulnerable "flanks" in "the Beast," capable of being "turned" like the flanks of an army; nor will he know pity. From his adamant heart come hatred, scorn, death. Those who have refused the tender pleadings of the Heart of Love, of Him who said, "Come unto

Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," will be crushed by the hard heart of the world-conqueror who knows neither love nor pity.

And will Job harbor in his bosom even the germ of all this horror? Shall independence, self-will, pride, have a resting-place in his bosom to hatch out such offspring of hell? Such is self-will in its essence, and such its full development—"fierce as ten thousand furies, terrible as hell." Beneath the fair exterior of man such possibilities lie hidden. Even in the child of God a nature lurks which has these features.

(3) Returning somewhat to the manner of the first part of the description, Jehovah dwells upon the invulnerability of this beast. Strong men are afraid of him, through terror and wounds their trembling hand misses its aim (ver. 25, *lit.*). Even if a sword should touch him, it fails to wound—no weapon, whether from a distance or close at hand, can reach a vital spot. Iron is trampled down as straw, brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee, the hurtling slingstone is like harmless chaff; darts and spears are mocked by him. His under parts, lying flat upon the earth, are not weak, but like strong sherds. His foaming path through the waters leaves a wake like a ship. "Upon the earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride" (vers. 33, 34).

This is the divine picture of the creature, and can we doubt that He would also draw from it the more dreadful description of "the Beast," and of

the self-will which makes him that? "Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13 : 4). The "deadly wound" that has been healed is but a fresh declaration of invulnerability. He "shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces" (Dan. 7 : 23). The very "mire" of the people, for the time at least, protects him. The turmoil he creates in the earth, marking it with ruin, shows his pathway. He has no equal upon earth. As the crocodile is king over all proud beasts, so *this* beast is king over all the children of pride. Shall Job, shall we, do him reverence and help on his kingdom? If not, but one path was open for him, and for us.

4.—*Job completely humbled* (chap. 42 : 1–6).

This portion forms the connecting link between the present part and the last main division of the book. As showing the effect upon Job of Jehovah's words, it belongs to the fourth division; as introductory to the conclusion of the whole book it belongs to the brief fifth division. Following the manner of his first response, we will look at it as an expression of the overwhelming effect which Jehovah's words had upon Job.

Again Job responds to the piercing, humbling words of Jehovah. Again he repeats his confession in a complete way. He acknowledges God's omnipotence, and that He cannot be thwarted in His purposes, which exhibit His power, wisdom and goodness as fully as do His works. There is a complete surrender and reversal of all that he had previously said against God.

Quoting Jehovah's own words, he asks himself, Who is he who darkens counsel?—dares to throw a shadow upon the Almighty! Mysteries there are in His ways, as in all creation and providence; but nothing is gained by rebelling against these mysteries of divine counsel. He, a man without knowledge of the most elementary truths of nature in their "hidden meaning," had uttered things beyond the scope of finite intelligence; had therefore spoken folly. How different he had been from the devout psalmist: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139 : 6). He had intruded into the things of God, and had dared to speak evil of divine omnipotence and goodness!

Still applying Jehovah's words to himself, Job himself asks, "Who is this"? "Hear, and I will speak." It is as though he would abjectly bow to these questions by repeating them, and give his answer to his divine Questioner. And what an answer it is! The only answer human pride can give to God: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,"—Job had in a general way been correctly instructed, but he had only learned *about* God;—"but now mine eye seeth Thee"—he had been brought face to face with God, not indeed visually, though there was the awful glory in the sky, but he had had a soul-perception of God by his enlightened reason, and chiefly by conscience. God had drawn near, personally near, and Job was conscious of that ineffable holiness, as well as power, that belong to Him. Previously he had been in the presence of man, and could more than hold his own with the best of

them. In God's presence no creature can boast, and Job was at last in that glorious, holy Presence. All the "filthy rags" of an imagined personal righteousness dropped from him, and he stood in all the naked horror of pride and rebellion against God. "Wherefore I abhor"—what? The whole past, every unjust suspicion, every hot accusation, every despairing, restless lament? Yea, more, the author and source of these—"I abhor *myself*." For who can doubt that Job's penitence goes beyond the mere judging of his words; he judged *himself*. Thus the very absence of the pronoun emphasizes the thought. "I abhor;" I stand out before all men, described by one word—"abhor."

Thus he takes his fitting place—the place indeed which he had outwardly taken at the beginning—in dust and ashes. He is the true mourner, the real penitent, he mourns—*himself;* he repents of *himself*, a sorrow and a penitence vastly deeper than any mere acknowledgment of actions and words.

These are the words for which we may say the Lord had long been listening. He had not heard them in the days of the patriarch's prosperity, though his piety was unquestioned. We may say, whatever *Satan's* sinister object was in all these sufferings inflicted upon Job, *God's* purpose was to elicit just this confession. And why? To humiliate him? No, but to give him the true glory—to privilege him, out of the dust, to behold the glory of the Lord, and never again to have a cloud upon his soul. Was the experience worth while? There is but one answer. May we all give it.

Division V. (Chap. 42 : 7–17).

"*The End of the Lord;*" *the result of the divine ways with Job, restoring him to greater blessing than before.*

Job has learned his lesson, and we might well leave him sitting in the ashes, still afflicted but happy in his newly found joy—the full knowledge of God. He might have "halted upon his thigh" for the balance of his days, and he would not have needed our pity.

But it is not like God needlessly to chasten even in this life of sorrow. "He doth not willingly afflict." We must therefore see "the end of the Lord," the outward recovery and restoration of the sufferer. It is this which is set before us in this brief concluding division of the book.

Brief as it is, it is most important. Job having already taken *his* place, Jehovah makes the three friends take theirs, not merely before *Him*, but before the one whom they had so unjustly suspected and so grievously maligned.

Then the restoration of health, wealth, family and honor are described in a few words, and we get our last glimpse of the patriarch in a happy old age, reaching the close of his life. The divisions are simple :

(1) The friends restored (vers. 7–9).
(2) Job's captivity turned (vers. 10, 11).
(3) Restoration to prosperity (vers. 12–15).
(4) The end (vers. 16, 17).

(1) God must first maintain His own honor. This is the basis of all blessing for the creature. Were it possible to conceive of His honor being overthrown, all would lapse into hopeless chaos. This is ever prominent in Scripture: "In the beginning, GOD." The first part of the law is devoted to His glory; the opening petitions of the "Lord's prayer" are concerned with that. The gospel is founded upon it, and in eternity heaven and earth will display it to an adoring universe.

We need not therefore be surprised that God turns to Eliphaz and his friends with stern rebuke for their part in the controversy which has, for Job, so happily closed. Addressing Eliphaz, as the leader of the three, Jehovah declares His wrath against them all, because they had not spoken of Him the thing that is right, as His servant Job had. And yet their entire contention had apparently been for God's righteousness! Had they not maintained this from the very outset, with many a noble description and many a scathing denunciation of evil? Had they not fastened the charge of iniquity upon Job in spite of absolute lack of proof, and in the face of well known facts to the contrary? Zealous for God's honor!—it had been their one theme.

At least apparently so. But God does not accept honor at the expense of truth. It is His glory that *all* His attributes blend in one harmonious light. Can He then accept a vindication of His character and ways that is based upon a false charge? That puts the stigma of wickedness and hypocrisy upon a man of whom He Himself had

declared, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." Can He allow so monstrous a theory of suffering to pass as that formulated by these men—that suffering is always the unerring finger pointing to wickedness? That it is all in wrath? What then becomes of His testing His own, of the sanctifying effect of chastening?

Truly these men in speaking against Job as they had, were really defaming the character of God. He cannot accept it, nor allow them to go unrebuked. He will have nothing to do with them until they make it right, by confession and sacrifice.

"As my servant Job hath." *When* had Job thus spoken "the thing that is right?" Surely not when pouring out bitter charges against God. Nor indeed do we chiefly think of the flashes of faith expressed in the intervals—"I will trust in Him," "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" nor in the noble words as to wisdom. All most true, excellent and beautiful; all falling in their proper place *after* the confession and repentance we have just dwelt upon.

This is the speaking of Jehovah "the thing that is right;" it is the taking and keeping of the sinful creature's place who cannot understand the least of those perfect ways—ways which are right when they *seem* most wrong. It is the declaration that God is God—Jehovah, the self-existent, perfect One; most wise and just and good as well as most powerful; righteous and holy in all His ways, whatever they may be. "Clouds and darkness" may be

round about Him, but, blessed be His name, "righteousness and judgment are the habitation," the foundation, "of His throne."

Here then is the lesson Job has learned—learned for himself and for others as well. Let these wise men show their wisdom by coming humbly before God on this ground. *He* has not banished them, but would have them draw near in the only way man can come, through the sacrifice. Let them take the seven bullocks — perfect submission and service unto death; and seven rams—complete devotion of all energy, and offer these as a burnt offering. Nor is the poor misunderstood Job lost sight of; he will intercede for these, lest they reap the fruit of their folly, "for him will I accept."

How complete the rebuke; how gracious the restoration; how tender the association of Job with it all!

And we who have the full light of God's grace, how perfect a picture we have of it here. Man's honor is laid low, his excellent things are seen to be folly, and he is turned from it all—from its good as well as its bad—to the Burnt Offering; to that One who is our perfect, all-sufficient Substitute. As the bullock, we see Him in all the strength of lowly service, "obedient unto death, the death of the cross." As the ram, we see a devotion of energy leading Him to the "supreme sacrifice." Oh, where is human righteousness, human obedience, in the light of that "wondrous cross!"

Notice, it is not a sin-offering the friends are to bring, though it includes the putting away of sin; nor the peace-offering, though it calls into the

highest communion. It is the first great offering, provided in God's ways in patriarchal times, in which all is for Him. Thus He who came, displacing all "sacrifice and offering," could say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Heb. 10 : 10).

And with that all-availing sacrifice is linked the intercession of the man who had learned his lesson, and in figure, gloried only in the Cross. Let us think of him, standing hand in hand with these friends and confessing their sin as he intercedes for them. No longer does the sharp accusation, "Miserable comforters are ye all" smite them; nor the bitter sarcasm, "Doubtless ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you." Accused and accusers look away from one another to that Burnt Offering, and see their common acceptance in it.

"Thus would I hide my blushing face,
When His blest form appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness
And melt mine eyes to tears."

It is most significant that the book closes, as it had begun, with the Burnt Offering (chap. 1). Christ is the End as He is the Beginning. CHRIST IS ALL.

(2) Now Jehovah can lift His hand from the sufferer, and turn all the grievous captivity into full and prosperous recovery. Job can say, I "have received of the Lord's hands double." The kindred and acquaintances who had fled from him and despised him, return with gifts and condolences.

We need not think of it as heartless or formal. God put it into their hearts to recognize His approval and acceptance of His servant. All his wealth is doubled—cattle, sheep and all the rest. What are such details to Him who is the Possessor of heaven and earth!

Does some suffering child of God whisper, "Oh, that it were so with me, that I could see health and prosperity and dear ones restored." Ah, what have we even *now?* The knowledge of God in Christ, the indwelling of the Spirit, the full and complete Word of God. And just beyond the sufferings of this "little while," the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Can we repine? Let us rather wait with patience till "the redemption of the purchased possession." As surely as the captivity of Job was turned, so surely shall every suffering child of God enter into the inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

(3) We now see the full manifestation of this restoration. Not only are all his possessions doubled, but seven sons and three daughters are given him. Is this an exception to the double endowment, or is it a hint that those other children, seven sons and three daughters, are not lost, that he will one day have them restored, and in the resurrection find that everything has been doubled.

The names of the daughters are given, no doubt with divine significance. Jemima, "a dove;" Keziah, "cassia;" Keren-happuch, "a horn of paint," or adornment. These are the fruit of Job's trials. The dove, suggesting the gentleness and

love of the bird of sorrow. Cassia, telling of the fragrance that has come from his bruising; and the horn of cosmetic, of the "beauty for ashes" that is now his. Love, fragrance, beauty—these come of our sorrows. Truly there are no daughters so fair as these. Their children cluster about Job's knees to give him the joy of youth even in his old age.

(4) And so the dear man passes from view—"old and full of days." He would once have said, "full of nights," but the light has shone upon him, and he walks in it until the "perfect day." We need not be surprised at the apocryphal ending of some interpreter, "It is written however that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up."

"Hast thou considered my servant Job?"

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

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